

Forty Singing Seamen

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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POEMS.

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DRAKE: AN ENGLISH EPIC.
BOOKS I.-III.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS,
EDINBURGH AND LONDON.

Forty Singing Seamen

And Other Poems

BY

ALFRED NOYES

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS

EDINBURGH AND LONDON

MCMVII

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TO
GARNETT.

My acknowledgments are due to the Editors of 'Blackwood's Magazine,' 'The Fortnightly Review,' 'The Spectator,' 'The Bookman,' 'The Speaker,' 'The Nation,' 'The Outlook,' and 'Country Life'; also to the Editors of 'The Standard' and 'The Daily Mail Literary Supplement,' for permission to reprint some of the following poems. A few have appeared in book form in America, and are now published in this country for the first time. Others are quite new.

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POEMS.

THE EMPIRE BUILDERS.

Who are the Empire-builders ? They
Whose desperate arrogance demands
A self-reflecting power to sway
A hundred little selfless lands ?
Lord God of battles, ere we bow
To these and to their soulless lust,
Let fall Thy thunders on us now
And strike us equal to the dust.

Before the stars in heaven were made
Our great Commander led us forth ;
And now the embattled lines are laid
To East, to West, to South, to North ;

THE EMPIRE BUILDERS.

According as of old He planned
We take our station in the field,
Nor dare to dream we understand
The splendour of the swords we wield.

We know not what the Soul intends
That lives and moves behind our deeds ;
We wheel and march to glorious ends
Beyond the common soldier's needs :
And some are raised to high rewards,
And some by regiments are hurled
To die upon the opposing swords
And sleep—forgotten by the world.

And not where navies churn the foam,
Nor called to fields of fierce emprise,
In many a country cottage-home
The Empire-builder lives and dies :
Or through the roaring street he goes
A lean and weary City slave,
The conqueror of a thousand foes
Who walks, unheeded, to his grave.

Leaders unknown of hopes forlorn
Go past us in the daily mart,
With many a shadowy crown of thorn
And many a kingly broken heart :

Though England's banner overhead
Ever the secret signal flew,
We only see its Cross is red
As children see the skies are blue.

For all are Empire-builders here,
Whose hearts are true to heaven and home
And, year by slow revolving year,
Fulfil the duties as they come ;
So simple seems the task, and yet
Many for this are crucified ;
Ay, and their brother-men forget
The simple wounds in palm and side.

But he that to his home is true,
Where'er the tides of power may flow,
Has built a kingdom great and new
Which Time nor Fate shall overthrow ;
These are the Empire-builders, these
Annex where none shall say them nay .
Beyond the world's uncharted seas,
Realms that can never pass away.

NELSON'S YEAR.

(1905.)

I.

"NEW YEAR, be good to England!"

This year, a hundred years ago,
The world attended, breathless, on the gathering pomp
of war,

While England and her deathless dead, with all their
mighty hearts aglow,
Swept onward like the dawn of doom to triumph at
Trafalgar ;

Then the world was hushed to wonder
As the cannon's dying thunder
Broke out again in muffled peals across the heaving sea,
And home the Victor came at last,
Home, home, with England's flag half-mast,
That never dipped to foe before, on Nelson's Victory.

II.

God gave this year to England ;
And what God gives He takes again ;
God gives us life, God gives us death : our victories
have wings ;
He gives us love and in its heart He hides the whole
world's heart of pain :
We gain by loss : impartially the eternal balance swings !
Ay ; in the fire we cherish
Our thoughts and dreams may perish ;
Yet shall it burn for England's sake triumphant as of old !
What sacrifice could gain for her
Our own shall still maintain for her,
And hold the gates of Freedom wide that take no keys
of gold.

III.

God gave this year to England ;
Her eyes are far too bright for tears
Of sorrow ; by her silent dead she kneels, too proud for
pride ;
Their blood, their love, have bought her right to claim
the new imperial years
In England's name for Freedom, in whose love her
children died ;

In whose love, though hope may dwindle,
Love and brotherhood shall kindle
Between the striving nations as a choral song takes
fire,
Till new hope, new faith, new wonder
Cleave the clouds of doubt asunder,
And speed the union of mankind in one divine desire.

IV.

Hasten the Kingdom, England ;
This year across the listening world
There came a sound of mingled tears where victory and
defeat
Clasped hands ; and Peace—among the dead—stood
wistfully, with white wings furled,
Knowing the strife was idle ; for the night and morning
meet,
Yet there is no disunion
In heaven's divine communion
As through the gates of twilight the harmonious morning
pours ;
Ah, God speed that grander morrow
When the world's divinest sorrow
Shall show how Love stands knocking at the world's
unopened doors.

v.

Hasten the Kingdom, England ;
Look up across the narrow seas,
Across the great white nations to thy dark imperial
throne
Where now three hundred million souls attend on
thine august decrees ;
Ah, bow thine head in humbleness, the Kingdom is
thine own :
Not for the pride or power
God gave thee this in dower ;
But, now the West and East have met and wept their
mortal loss,
Now that their tears have spoken
And the long dumb spell is broken,
Is it nothing that thy banner bears the red eternal cross ?

vi.

Ay ! Lift the flag of England ;
And lo, that Eastern cross is there,
Veiled with a hundred meanings as our English eyes are
veiled ;
Yet to the grander dawn we move oblivious of the
sign we bear,
Oblivious of the heights we climb until the last is scaled ;

Then with all the earth before us
And the great cross floating o'er us
We shall break the sword we forged of old, so weak we
were and blind ,
While the inviolate heaven discloses
England's Rose of all the roses
Dawning wide and ever wider o'er the kingdom of
mankind.

VII.

Hasten the Kingdom, England ;
For then all nations shall be one ;
One as the ordered stars are one that sing upon their
way,
One with the rhythmic glories of the swinging sea, and
the rolling sun,
One with the flow of life and death, the tides of night
and day ;
One with all dreams of beauty,
One with all laws of duty ;
One with the weak and helpless while the one sky burns
above ;
Till eyes by tears made glorious
Look up at last victorious,
And lips that starved break open in one song of life and
love.

VIII.

New Year, be good to England ;
And when the Spring returns again
Rekindle in our English hearts the universal Spring,
That we may wait in faith upon the former and the
latter rain,
Till all waste places burgeon and the wildernesses sing ;
Pour the glory of thy pity
Through the dark and troubled city ;
Pour the splendour of thy beauty over wood and meadow
fair ;
May the God of battles guide thee
And the Christ-child walk beside thee
With a word of peace for England in the dawn of
Nelson's Year.

IN TIME OF WAR.

I.

To-NIGHT o'er Bagshot heath the purple heather
Rolls like dumb thunder to the splendid West ;
And mighty ragged clouds are massed together
Above the scarred old common's broken breast ;

And there are hints of blood between the boulders.
Red glints of fiercer blossom, bright and bold ;
And round the shaggy mounds and sullen shoulders -
The gorse repays the sun with savage gold.

And now, as in the West the light grows holy,
And all the hollows of the heath grow dim,
Far off, a sulky rumble rolls up slowly
Where guns at practice growl their evening hymn.

And here and there in bare clean yellow spaces
The print of horse-hoofs like an answering cry
Strikes strangely on the sense from lonely places
Where there is nought but empty heath and sky.

The print of warlike hoofs, where now no figure
Of horse or man* along the sky's red rim
Breaks on the low horizon's rough black rigour
To make the gorgeous waste less wild and grim ;

Strangely the hoof-prints strike, a Crusoe's wonder,
Framed with sharp furze amongst the footless fells
A menace and a mystery, rapt asunder,
As if the whole wide world contained nought else,—

Nought but the grand despair of desolation
Between us and that wild, how far, how near,
Where, clothed with thunder, nation grapples nation,
And Slaughter grips the clay-cold hand of Fear.

II.

And far above the purple heath the sunset stars
awaken,
And ghostly hosts of cloud across the West begin to
stream,
And all the low soft winds with muffled cannonades are
shaken,
And all the blood-red blossom draws aloof into a
dream ;

A dream—no more—and round the dream the clouds
are curled together ;

A dream of two great stormy hosts embattled in the
sky ;

For there against the low red heavens each purple clump
of heather

Becomes a serried host of spears around a battle-
cry ;

Becomes the distant battlefield or brings the dream so
near it

That, almost, as the purple smoke around them reels
and swims,

A thousand grey-lipped faces flash—ah, hark, the heart
can hear it—

The sharp command, the clash of steel, the sudden
sough of limbs.

And through the purple thunders there are silent shadows
creeping

With murderous gleams of light, and then—a mighty
leaping roar

Where foe and foe are met ; and then—a long low sound
of weeping

As Death laughs out from sea to sea, another fight is
o'er.

Another fight—but ah, how much is over? Night
descending

Draws o'er the scene her ghastly moon-shot veil with
piteous hands ;

But 'all around the bivouac-glare the shadowy pickets
wending

See sights, hear sounds that only war's own madness
understands.

No circle of the accursed dead where dreaming Dante
wandered,

No city of death's eternal dole could match this
mortal world

Where men, before the living soul and quivering flesh
are 'suffered,

Through all the bestial shapes of pain to one wide
grave are hurled.

But in the midst for those who dare beyond the fringe
to enter

Be sure one kingly figure lies with pale and blood-
soiled face,

And round his brows a ragged crown of thorns ; and in
the centre

Of those pale folded hands and feet the sigil of his
grace.

See, how the pale limbs, marred and scarred in love's
lost battle, languish ;

See how the splendid passion still smiles quietly from
his eyes :

Come, come and see a king indeed, who triumphs in his
anguish,

Who conquers here in utter loss beneath the eternal
skies.

For unto lips so deadly calm what answer shall be
given ?

Oh pale, pale king so deadly still beneath the un-
shaken stars,

Who shall deny thy kingdom here, though heaven and
earth were riven

With the last roar of onset in the world's intestine
wars ?

All round him reeks the obscene red hell—the scream
of haggled horses,

The curse, the moan, the tossing arms, the hideous
twisted forms,

Where, as the surgeons call up life's last pitiful resources,
The darkness heaves around them like a mass of
mangled worms.

"Life, doctor, life!" "Be wise; you'd better die: 'twill soon be over,"—

The blackened trunk drops guttering back, the mouth is dumb again:

"What use were life to you, my lad? she wouldn't know her lover,

And cruelty here is pity's best—to put you out of pain."

And far away in lonely homes the lamp of hope is burning,

All night the white-faced women wait with aching eyes of prayer,

All night the little children dream of father's glad returning,

All night he lies beneath the stars and—dreams no more out there.

Only the senseless clay-cold hand may clasp some crumpled letter,—

A lantern—see—the big round scrawl, the child's long-studied phrase:

"When Dadda comes again . . . his girl will try so much much better:

She'll be much taller, too; and much more grown-up in her ways."

The laugh is Death's ; he laughs as erst o'er hours that
England cherished,

"Count up, count up the stricken homes that wail
the firstborn son,

Count by your starved and fatherless the tale of what
hath perished ;

Then gather with your foes and ask if you—or I
—have won."

III.

O'er Bagshot heath it rolls, the old old story,—

The great moon dawns ; the sunset dies away ;
Year strengthens year as glory kindles glory
From its own sad procession of decay.

When shall the sun-dawn of the perfect nation,

England, rise white above the blood-red sea ;
When shall war die and by death's new creation
Begin the long-sought world-wide harmony ?

Nearer, still nearer, creeps the light we hope for,

Yet still eludes our war-worn aching eyes ;
Nearer, still nearer, steals the truth we grope for,
Yet, as we think to grasp it, fades and flies.

The world rolls on ; and love and peace are mated :
Still on the breast of England, like a star,
The blood-red lonely heath blows, consecrated,
A brooding practice-ground for blood-red war.

Yet is there nothing out of tune with Nature
There, where the skylark showers his earliest song,
Where sun and wind have moulded every feature,
And one world-music bears each note along.

There many a brown-winged kestrel swoops or hovers
In poised and patient quest of his own prey ;
And there are fern-clad glens where happy lovers
May kiss the thurmuring summer noon away.

There, as the primal earth was—all is glorious
Perfect and wise and wonderful in view
Of that great heaven through which we rise victorious
O'er all that strife and change and death can do.

No nation yet has risen o'er earth's first nature ;
Though love illumed each individual mind,
Still, like some dark half-formed primeval creature
The fierce mob crawled a thousand years behind.

Still on the standards of the great World-Powers
Lion and bear and eagle sullenly brood,
Whether the slow folds flap o'er halcyon hours
Or stream tempestuously o'er fields of blood.

By war's red evolution we have risen
Far, since fierce Erda chose her conquering few,
And out of Death's red gates and Time's grey prison
They burst, elect from battle, tried and true,

Tempered like sword-blades ; but life's vast procession
Has passed beyond the help of war's wild day,
The day where now a world in retrogression
Goes hurrying down the broad and hopeless way.

For now Death mocks at youth and love and glory,
Chivalry slinks behind his loaded mines,
With meaner murderous lips War tells her story,
And round her cunning brows no laurel shines.

And here to us the eternal charge is given
To rise and make our low world touch God's high :
To hasten God's own kingdom, Man's own heaven,
And teach Love's grander army how to die.

No kingdom then, no long-continuing city
Shall e'er again be stablished by the sword ;
No blood-bought throne defy the powers of pity,
No despot's crown outweigh one helot's word.

Imperial England, breathe thy marching orders :
The great host waits ; the end, the end is close,
When earth shall know thy peace in all her borders,
And all her deserts blossom with thy Rose.

Princedom and peoples rise and flash and perish
As the dew passes from the flowering thorn ;
Yet the one Kingdom that our dreams still cherish
Lives in a light that blinds the world's red morn.

Hasten the Kingdom, England, the days darken ;
We would not have thee slacken watch or ward,
Nor doff thine armour till the whole world hearken,
Nor till Time bid thee lay aside the sword.

Hasten the Kingdom ; hamlet, heath, and city,
We are all at war, one bleeding bulk of pain ;
Little we know ; but one thing—by God's pity—
We know, and know all else on earth is vain.

We know not yet how much we dare, how little ;
We dare not dream of peace ; yet, as at need,
England, God help thee, let no jot or tittle
Of Love's last law go past thee without heed.

Who saves his life shall lose it ! The great ages
Bear witness—Rome and Babylon and Tyre
Cry from the dust-stopped lips of all their sages,—
There is no hope if man can climb no higher.

England, by God's grace set apart to ponder
A little while from battle, ah, take heed,
Keep watch, keep watch, beside thy sleeping thunder ;
Call down Christ's pity while those others bleed ;

Waken the God within thee, while the sorrow
Of battle surges round a distant shore,
While Time is thine, lest on some deadly morrow
The moving finger write—*but thine no more.*

Little we know—but though the advancing æons
Win every painful step by blood and fire,
Though tortured mouths must chant the world's great
pæans,
And martyred souls proclaim the world's desire ;

Though war be nature's engine of rejection,
 Soon, soon, across her universal verge
The great surviving host of Time's election
 Shall into God's diviner light emerge.

Hasten the Kingdom, England, queen and mother ;
 Little we know of all Time's works and ways ;
Yet this, this, this is sure : we need none other
 Knowledge or wisdom, hope or aim or praise,

But to keep this one stormy banner flying
 In this one faith that none shall e'er disprove,
Then drive the embattled world before thee, crying,
 There is one Emperor, whose name is Love.

TO ENGLAND IN 1907.

(A PRAYER THAT SHE MIGHT SPEAK FOR PEACE.)

Now is thy foot set on the splendid way :
Hold this hour fast ! Though yet the skies be gray,
Lift up thy voice to greet the perfect day,
Speak, England, speak across the trembling sea !

E'en now the grandest dawn that ever rose
Has touched the clouds to glory : the light grows
White as a star where thy keen helmet glows
Fronting the morn that makes all nations free.

Speak from thine island throne ! Here, in thy Gate,
Now, for thy voice alone, the nations wait :
Speak with the heart that made and keeps thee great,
Speak the great word of peace from sea to sea.

The nations wait, scarce knowing what they need :
Cold cunning claims their ears for lust and greed !
The poor and weak, with struggling hands that bleed,
Pray to thee now that thou wilt set them free.

Thou that hast dared so many a thunder-blast,
Is all thy vaunted empery so soon past ?
First of the first, art thou afraid at last
To hold thy hands out first across the sea ?

Not for such fears God gave thee thy rich dower,
The sea-wrought sceptre and the imperial power !
Ages have poured their blood for this one hour
That thou mightst speak and set the whole world free.

The poor and weak uplift their manacled hands
To thee, our Mother, our Lady and Queen of lands :
Anguished in prayer before thy footstool stands
Peace, with her white wings glimmering o'er the sea.

Others may shrink whose naked frontiers face
A million foemen of an alien race ;
But thou, Impérial, by thy pride of place
O, canst thou falter or fear to set them free ?

Thou, thou alone canst speak ; thou, thou alone,
From the sure citadel of thy rock-bound throne :
Trust thy strong heart ; thine island is thine own,
 Armed with the thunder and lightning of the sea.

Fools prate of pride where butchered legions fall ;
Peace has one battle sterner than them all
(England, on thee our ringing trumpets call !),
 One battle that shall set the whole world free.

Speak, speak and act ! The sceptre is in thine hand ;
Proclaim the reign of love from land to land ;
Then come the world against thee, thou shalt stand !
 Speak, with the world-wide voice of thine own sea.

ODE FOR A SEVENTIETH BIRTHDAY.

(IN HONOUR OF A. C. SWINBURNE.)

I.

HE needs no crown of ours, whose golden heart
 Poured out its wealth so freely in pure praise
 Of others : him the imperishable bays
 Crown, and on Sunium's height he sits apart :
 He hears immortal greetings this great morn :
 Fain would we bring, we also, all we may,
 Some wayside flower of transitory bloom,
 Frail tribute, only born
 To greet the gladness of this April day
 Then waste on death's dark wind its faint perfume.

II.

Here on this April day the whole sweet Spring
 Speaks thro' his music only, or seems to speak,
 And we that hear, with hearts uplift and weak,
 What can we more than claim him for our king ?

26 *ODE FOR A SEVENTIETH BIRTHDAY.*

Here on this April day (and many a time
Shall April come and find him singing still)
He is one with the world's great heart beyond the
 years,
One with the pulsing rhyme
Of tides that work some heavenly rhythmic will
And hold the secret of all human tears.

III.

For he, the last of that immortal race
Whose music, like a robe of living light
Re-clothed each new-born age and made it bright
As with the glory of Love's transfiguring face,
| Reddened earth's roses, kindled the deep blue
Of England's radiant, ever-singing sea,
Recalled the white Thalassian from the foam,
Woke the dim stars anew
And triumphed in the triumph of Liberty,
We claim him ; but he hath not here his home.

IV.

Not here ; round him to-day the clouds divide :
We know what faces thro' that rose-flushed air
Now bend above him : Shelley's face is there,
And Hugo's, lit with more than kingly pride.

Replenished there with splendour, the blind eyes
Of Milton bend from heaven to meet his own,
Sappho is there, crowned with those queenlier flowers
Whose graft outgrew our skies,
His gift : Shakespeare leans earthward from his throne
With hands outstretched. He needs no crown of
ours.

IN CLOAK OF GRAY.

I.

LOVE's a pilgrim, cloaked in gray,
And his feet are pierced and bleeding :
Have ye seen him pass this way
Sorrowfully pleading ?
Ye that weep the world away,
Have ye seen King Love to-day ?—

II.

Yea, we saw him ; but he came
Poppy-crowned and white of limb !
Song had touched his lips with flame,
And his eyes were drowsed and dim ;
And we kissed the hours away
Till night grew rosier than the day.—

III.

Hath he left you?—yea, he left us
A little while ago,
Of his laughter quite bereft us
And his limbs of snow ;
We know not why he went away
Who ruled our revels yesterday.—

IV.

Because ye did not understand
Love cometh from afar,
A pilgrim out of Holy Land
•Guided by a star :
Last night he came in cloak of gray,
Begging. Ye knew him not : he went his way.

A RIDE FOR THE QUEEN.

QUEEN of queens, oh lady mine,
You who say you love me,
Here's a cup of crimson wine
To the stars above me ;
Here's a cup of blood and gall
For a soldier's quaffing !
What's the prize to crown it all ?
Death ? I'll take it laughing !
I ride for the Queen to-night !

Though I find no knightly fee
Waiting on my lealty,
High upon the gallows-tree
Faithful to my fealty,
What had I but love and youth,
Hope and fame in season ?
She has proved that more than truth
Glorifies her treason !

Would that other do as much ?

Ah, but if in sorrow

Some forgotten look or touch

Pierce her heart to-morrow

She might love me yet, I think ;

So her lie befriends me,

Though I know there's darker drink

Down the road she sends me.

Ay, one more great chance is mine !

(Can I faint or falter ?)

She shall pour my blood like wine,

Make my heart her altar,

Burn it to the dust ! For, there,

• What if o'er the embers

She should stoop and—I should hear—

“ Hush ! Thy love remembers ! ”

One more chance for every word

Whispered to betray me,

While she buckled on my sword

Smiling to allay me ;

One more chance ; ah, let me not

Mar her perfect pleasure ;

Love shall pay me, jot by jot,

Measure for her measure.

Faith shall think I never knew,
I will be so fervent !
Doubt shall dream I dreamed her true,
As her war-worn servant !
Whoso flouts her spotless name
(Love, I wear thy token !)
He shall face one sword of flame
Ere the lie be spoken !

God, the world is white with may,
(Fragrant as her bosom !)
Could I find a sweeter way
Through the year's young blossom,
Where her warm red mouth on mine
Woke my soul's desire ? . . .
Hey ! The cup of crimson wine,
Blood and gall and fire !

Castle Doom or Gates of Death ?
(Smile again for pity !)
"Boot and horse," my lady saith,
"Spur against the City,
Bear this message !" God and she
Still forget the guerdon ;
Nay, the rope is on the tree !
That shall bear the burden !
I ride for the Queen to-night !

SONG.

I.

WHEN that I loved a maiden
My heaven was in her eyes,
And when they bent above me
I knew no deeper skies ;
But when her heart forsook me
My spirit broke its bars,
For grief beyond the sunset
And love beyond the stars.

II.

When that I loved a maiden
She seemed the world to me :
Now is my soul the universe,
My dreams the sky and sea :
There is no heaven above me,
No glory binds or bars
My grief beyond the sunset,
My love beyond the stars.

III.

When that I loved a maiden
I worshipped where she trod ;
But, when she clove my heart, the cleft
Set free the imprisoned god :
Then was I king of all the world,
My soul had burst its bars,
For grief beyond the sunset
And love beyond the stars.

THE HIGHWAYMAN.

PART ONE.

THE wind was a torrent of darkness among the gusty
trees,

The moon was a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy
seas,

The road was a ribbon of moonlight over the purple
moor,

And the highwayman came riding—

Riding—riding—

The highwayman came riding, up to the old inn-door.

II.

He'd a French cocked-hat on his forehead, a bunch of
lace at his chin,

A coat of the claret velvet, and breeches of brown
doe-skin ;

They fitted with never a wrinkle: his boots were up
to the thigh!
And he rode with a jewelled twinkle,
His pistol butts a-twinkle,
His rapier hilt a-twinkle, under the jewelled sky.

III.

Over the cobbles he clattered and clashed in the dark
inn-yard,
And he tapped with his whip on the shutters, but all
was locked and barred;
He whistled a tune to the window, and who should
be waiting there
But the landlord's black-eyed daughter,
Bess, the landlord's daughter,
Plaiting a dark red love-knot into her long black hair.

IV.

And dark in the dark old inn-yard a stable-wicket
creaked
Where Tim the ostler listened; his face was white
and peaked;

His eyes were hollows of madness, his hair like mouldy
hay,
But he loved the landlord's daughter,
The landlord's red-lipped daughter,
Dumb as a dog he listened, and he heard the robber
say—

v.

"One kiss, my bonny sweetheart, I'm after a prize
to-night,
But I shall be back with the yellow gold before the
morning light ;
Yet, if they press me sharply, and harry me through
the day,
Then look for me by moonlight,
Watch for me by moonlight,
I'll come to thee by moonlight, though hell should
bar the way."

vi.

He rose upright in the stirrups ; he scarce could reach
her hand,
But she loosened her hair i' the casement ! His face
burnt like a brand

As the black cascade of perfume came tumbling over
his breast ;
And he kissed its waves in the moonlight,
 (Oh, sweet black waves in the moonlight !)
Then he tugged at his rein in the moonlight, and
galloped away to the West.

PART TWO.

I.

He did not come in the dawning ; he did not come
at noon ;
And out o' the tawny sunset, before the rise o' the moon,
When the road was a gipsy's ribbon, looping the purple
moor,
A red-coat troop came marching—
 Marching—marching—
King George's men came marching, up to the old inn-
door.

II.

They said no word to the landlord, they drank his
ale instead,
But they gagged his daughter and bound her to the
foot of her narrow bed ;

Two of them knelt at her casement, with muskets at
their side !

There was death at every window ;

And hell at one dark window ;

For Bess could see, through her casement, the road
that *he* would ride.

III.

They had tied her up to attention, with many a
sniggering jest ;

They had bound a musket beside her, with the barrel
beneath her breast !

“ Now keep good watch ! ” and they kissed her.

She heard the dead man say—

Look for me by moonlight ;

Watch for me by moonlight ;

*I'll come to thee by moonlight, though hell should bar
the way !*

IV.

She twisted her hands behind her ; but all the knots
held good !

She writhed her hands till her fingers were wet with
sweat or blood !

They stretched and strained in the darkness, and the
hours crawled by like years,
Till, now, on the stroke of midnight,
Cold, on the stroke of midnight,
The tip of one finger touched it! The trigger at least
was hers!

v.

The tip of one finger touched it; she strove no more
for the rest!
Up, she stood up to attention, with the barrel beneath
her breast,
She would not risk their hearing; she would not strive
again;
For the road lay bare in the moonlight;
Blank and bare in the moonlight;
And the blood of her veins in the moonlight throbbed
to her love's refrain.

vi.

Tlot-tlot; tlot-tlot! Had they heard it? The horse-
hoofs ringing clear;
Tlot-tlot, tlot-tlot, in the distance? Were they deaf that
they did not hear?

Down the ribbon of moonlight, over the brow of the
hill,
The highwayman came riding,
Riding, riding !
The red-coats looked to their priming ! She stood up,
straight and still !

VII.

Tlot-tlot, in the frosty silence ! *Tlot-tlot*, in the echoing
night !
Nearer he came and nearer ! Her face was like a
light !
Her eyes grew wide for a moment ; she drew one last
deep breath,
Then her finger moved in the moonlight,
Her musket shattered the moonlight,
Shattered her breast in the moonlight and warned him
—with her death.

VIII.

He turned ; he spurred to the Westward ; he did not
know who stood
Bowed, with her head o'er the musket, drenched with
her own red blood !

Not till the dawn he heard it, and slowly blanched to
hear

How Bess, the landlord's daughter,

The landlord's black-eyed daughter,

Had watched for her love in the moonlight, and died in
the darkness there.

IX.

Back, he spurred like a madman, shrieking a curse to
the sky,

With the white road smoking behind him, and his
rapier brandished high !

Blood-red were his spurs i' the golden noon ; wine-red
was his velvet coat ;

When they shot him down on the highway,

Down like a dog on the highway,

And he lay in his blood on the highway, with the bunch
of lace at his throat.

X.

*And still of a winter's night, they say, when the wind
is in the trees,*

*When the moon is a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy
seas,*

*When the road is a ribbon of moonlight over the purple
moor,*

A highwayman comes riding—

Riding—riding—

A highwayman comes riding, up to the old inn-door.

XI.

*Over the cobbles he clatters and clangs in the dark inn-
yard ;*

*And he taps with his whip on the shutters, but all is
locked and barred ;*

*He whistles a tune to the window, and who should be
waiting there*

But the landlord's black-eyed daughter,

Bess, the landlord's daughter,

Plaiting a dark red love-knot into her long black hair.

THE HAUNTED PALACE.

COME to the haunted palace of my dreams,
My crumbling palace by the eternal sea,
Which, like a childless mother, still must croon
Her ancient sorrows to the cold white moon,
Or, ebbing tremulously,
With one pale arm, where the long foam-fringe gleams,
Will gather her rustling garments, for a space
Of muffled weeping, round her dim white face.

A princess dwelt here once : long, long ago
This tower rose in the sunset like a prayer ;
And, through the witchery of that casement, rolled
In one soft cataract of faery gold
Her wonder-woven hair ;
Her face leaned out and took the sacred glow
Of evening, like the star that listened, high
Above the gold clouds of the western sky.

Was there no prince behind her in the gloom,
No crimson shadow of his rich array ?
Her face leaned down to me : I saw the tears
Bleed through her eyes with the slow pain of years,
And her mouth yearned to say—
“ Friend, is there any message, from the tomb
Where love lies buried ? ” But she only said—
“ Oh, friend, canst thou not save me from my dead ?
“ Canst thou not minister to a soul in pain ?
Or hast thou then no comfortable word ?
Is there no faith in thee wherewith to atone
For his unfaith who left me here alone,
Heart-sick with hope deferred ;
Oh, since my love will never come again,
Bring'st thou no respite through the desolate years,
Respite from these most unavailing tears ? ”
Then saw I, and mine own tears made response,
Her woman's heart come breaking through her eyes ;
And, as I stood beneath the tower's grey wall,
She let the soft waves of her deep hair fall
Like flowers from Paradise
Over my fevered face : then all at once
Pity was passion ; and like a sea of bliss
Those waves rolled o'er me drowning for her kiss.

* * * * *

Seven years we dwelt together in that tower,
Seven years in that old palace by the sea,
And sitting at that casement, side by side,
She told me all her pain : how love had died
Now for all else but me ;

Yet how she had loved that other : like a flower
Her red lips parted and with low sweet moan
/ She pressed their tender suffering on mine own,

And always with vague eyes she gazed afar,
Out through the casement o'er the changing tide ;
And slowly was my heart's hope brought to nought
That some day I should win each wandering thought
And make her my soul's bride :
Still, still she gazed across the cold sea-bar ;
Ay ; with her hand in mine, still, still and pale,
Waited and watched for the unreturning sail.

And I, too, watched and waited as the years
Rolled on ; and slowly was I brought to feel
How on my lips she met her lover's kiss,
How my heart's pulse begat an alien bliss ;
And cold and hard as steel
For me those eyes were, though their tender tears
Were salt upon my cheek ; and then one night
I saw a sail come through the pale moonlight.

And like an alien ghost I stole away,
And like a breathing lover he returned ;
And in the woods I dwelt, or sometimes crept
Out in the grey dawn while the lovers slept
And the great sea-tides yearned
Against the iron shores ; and faint and grey
The tower and the shut casement rose above :
And on the earth I sobbed out all my love.

At last, one royal rose-hung night in June,
When the warm air like purple Hippocrene
Brimmed the dim valley and sparkled into stars,
I saw them cross the foam-lit sandy bars
And dark pools, glimmering green,
To bathe beneath the honey-coloured moon :
I saw them swim out from that summer shore,
Kissed by the sea, but they returned no more.

* * * * *

And into the dark palace, like a dream
* Remembered after long oblivious years,
Through the strange open doors I crept and saw
As some poor pagan might, with reverent awe,
And deep adoring tears,
The moonlight through that painted window stream
Over the soft wave of their vacant bed ;
There sank I on my knees and bowed my head,

For as a father by a cradle bows,
Remembering two dead children of his own,
I knelt ; and by the cry of the great deep
There love seemed like a murmuring in their sleep,
A little fevered moan,
A little tossing of childless arms that shows
How dreams go by ! " If I were God," I wept,
" I would have pity on children while they slept.

* * * * *

The days, the months, the years drift over me ;
This is my habitation till I die :
Nothing is changed ; they left that open book
Beside the window. Did he sit and look
Up at her face as I
Looked while she read it, and the enchanted sea
With rich eternities of love unknown
Fulfilled the low sweet music of her tone ?

So did he listen, looking in her face ?
And did she ever pause, remembering so
The heart that bore the whole weight of her pain
Until her own heart's love returned again ?

In the still evening glow
I sit and listen in this quiet place,
And only hear—like notes of phantom birds—
Their perished kisses and little broken words.

- Come to the haunted palace of my dreams,
My crumbling palace by the eternal sea,
Which, like a childless mother, still must croon
Her ancient sorrows to the cold white moon,
Or, ebbing tremulously,*
- *With one pale arm, where the long foam-fringe gleams,
Will gather her rustling garments, for a space
Of muffled weeping, round her dim white face.*

THE SCULPTOR.

THIS is my statue : cold and white
It stands and takes the morning light !
The world may flout my hopes and fears,
Yet was my life's work washed with tears
Of blood when this poor hand last night
Finished the pain of years.

Speak for me, patient lips of stone,
Blind eyes my lips have rested on
So often when the o'er-weary brain
Would grope to human love again,
And found this grave cold mask alone
And the tears fell like rain.

Ay ; is this all ? Is this the brow
I fondled, never wondering how
It lived—the face of pain and bliss
That through the marble met my kiss ?
Oh, though the whole world praise it now,
Let no man dream it is !

They blame ; they cannot blame aright
Who never knew what infinite
 Deep loss must shame me most of all !
 They praise ; like earth their praises fall
Into a tomb. The hour of light
 Is flown beyond recall.

Yet have I seen, yet have I known,
And oh, not tombed in cold white stone
 The dream I lose on earth below ;
 And I shall come with face aglow
And find and claim it for my own
 Before God's throne, I know.

SUMMER.

(AN ODE.)

Now like a pageant of the Golden Year

In rich memorial pomp the hours go by,
With rose-embroidered flags unfurled
And tasselled bugles calling through the world

Wake, for your hope draws near !
Wake, for in each soft porch of azure sky,
Seen through each arch of pale green leaves, the Gate
Of Eden swings apart for Summer's royal state.

Ah, when the Spirit of the moving scene
Has entered in, the splendour will be spent !
The flutes will cease, the gates will close ;
Only the scattered crimson of the rose,
The wild wood's hapless queen,
Dis-kingdomed, will declare the way he went ;
And, in a little while, her court will go,
Pass like a cloud and leave no trace on earth below.

Tell us no more of Autumn, the slow gold
 Of fruitage ripening in a world's decay,
 The falling leaves, the moist rich breath
 Of woods that swoon and crumble into death

Over the gorgeous mould :
 Give us the flash and scent of keen-edged may
 Where wastes that bear no harvest yield their bloom,
 Rude crofts of flowering nettle, bents of yellow
 broom.

The very reeds and sedges of the fen
 Open their hearts and blossom to the sky ;
 The wild thyme on the mountain's knees
 Unrolls its purple market to the bees ;
 Unharvested of men
 The Traveller's Joy can only smile and die.
 Joy, joy alone the throbbing whitethroats bring,
 Joy to themselves and heaven ! They were but born
 to sing !

And see, between the northern-scented pines,
 The whole sweet summer sharpens to a glow !
 See, as the well-spring splashes cool
 Over a shadowy green fern-fretted pool
 The mystic sunbeam shines
 For one mad moment on a breast of snow

A warm white shoulder and a glowing arm
Up-flung, where some swift Undine sinks in shy
alarm.

And if she were not all a dream, and lent
Life for a little to your own desire,
Oh, lover in the hawthorn lane,
Dream not you hold her, or you dream in vain !
The violet, spray-besprent
When from that plunge the rainbows flashed like fire,
Will scarce more swiftly lose its happy dew
Than eyes which Undine haunts will cease to shine
on you.

What though the throstle pour his heart away,
A happy spendthrift of uncounted gold,
Swinging upon a blossomed briar
With soft throat lifted in a wild desire
To make the world his may.
Ever the pageant through the gates is rolled
Further away ; in vain the rich notes throng
Flooding the mellow noon with wave on wave of
song.

The feathery meadows like a lilac sea,
Knee-deep, with honeyed clover, red and white,

Roll billowing : the crisp clouds pass
Trailing their soft blue shadows o'er the grass ;
 The skylark, mad with glee,
Quivers, up, up, to lose himself in light ;
• And, through the forest, like a fairy dream
 Through some dark mind, the ferns in branching
 beauty stream.

•
Enough of joy ! A little respite lend,
 Summer, fair god that hast so little heed
Of these that serve thee but to die,
Mere trappings of thy tragic pageantry !
 Show us the end, the end !
We too, with human hearts that break and bleed,
 Match to the night that rounds their fleeting hour,
 And feel we, too, perchance but serve some loftier
 Power.

Oh that our hearts might pass away with thee,
 Burning and pierced and full of thy sweet pain,
Burst through the gates with thy swift soul,
Hunt thy most white perfection to the goal,
 Nor wait, once more to see
Thy chalice d lilies rotting in the rain,
 Thy ragged yellowing banners idly hung
 In woods that have forgotten all the songs we sung !

*Peace! Like a pageant of the Golden Year
In rich memorial pomp the hours go by,
With rose-embroidered flags unfurled
And tasselled bugles calling through the world
Wake, for your hope draws near!
Wake, for in each soft porch of azure sky,
Seen through each arch of pale green leaves, the Gate
Of Eden swings apart for Summer's royal state.*

Not wait! Forgive, forgive that feeble cry
Of blinded passion all unworthy thee!
For here the spirit of man may claim
A loftier vision and a nobler aim
Than e'er was born to die;
Man only, of earth, throned on Eternity,
From his own sure abiding-place can mark
How earth's great golden dreams go past into the
dark.

AT DAWN.

O HESPER-PHOSPHOR, far away

Shining, the first, the last white star,

Hear'st thou the strange, the ghostly cry,

That moan of an ancient agony

From purple forest to golden sky

Shivering over the breathless bay ?

It is not the wind that wakes with the day ;

For see, the gulls that wheel and call,

Beyond the tumbling white-topped bar,

Catching the sun-dawn on their wings,

Like snow-flakes or like rose-leaves fall,

Flutter and fall in airy rings ;

And drift, like lilies ruffling into blossom

Upon some golden lake's unwrinkled bosom.

Are not the forest's deep-lashed fringes wet

With tears ? Is not the voice of all regret

Breaking out of the dark earth's heart ?

She too, she too, has loved and lost ; and we-
We that remember our lost Arcady,
Have we not known, we too,
The primal greenwood's arch of blue,
The radiant clouds at sun-rise curled
Around the brows of the golden world ;
The marble temples, washed with dew,
To which with rosy limbs aflame
The violet-eyed Thalassian came,
Came, pitiless, only to display
How soon the youthful splendour dies away ;
 Came, only to depart
Laughing across the grey-grown bitter sea ;
For each man's life is earth's epitome,
And though the years bring more than aught they
 take,
Yet might his heart and hers well break
Remembering how one prayer must still be vain,
 How one fair hope is dead,
 One passion quenched, one glory fled
With those first loves that never come again.

How many years, how many generations,
 Have heard that sigh in the dawn,
When the dark earth yearns to the unforgotten nations
 And the old loves withdrawn,

Old loves, old lovers, wonderful and unnumbered
As waves on the wine-dark sea,
'Neath the tall white towers of Troy and the temples
that slumbered
In Thessaly?

From the beautiful palaces, from the miraculous portals,
The swift white feet are flown!
They were taintless of dust, the proud, the peerless
Immortals

As they sped to their loftier throne!
Perchance they are there, earth dreams, on the shores
of Hesper,
Her rosy-bosomed Hours,
Listening the wild fresh forest's enchanted whisper,
Crowned with its new strange flowers;
Listening the great new ocean's triumphant thunder
On the stainless unknown shore,
While that perilous queen of the world's delight and
wonder
Comes white from the foam once more.

When the mists divide with the dawn o'er those
glittering waters,
Do they gaze over unhoarded seas—
Naiad and nymph and the woodland's rose-crowned
daughters
And the Oceanides?

Do they sing together, perchance, in that diamond
splendour,

That world of dawn and dew,
With eyelids twitching to tears and with eyes grown
tender

The sweet old songs they knew,
The songs of Greece? Ah, with harp-strings mute
do they falter

As the earth like a small star pales?
When the heroes launch their ship by the smoking altar
Does a memory lure their sails?

Far, far away, do their hearts resume the story
That never on earth was told,
When all those urgent oars on the waste of glory
Cast up its gold?

*Are not the forest fringes wet
With tears? Is not the voice of all regret
Breaking out of the dark earth's heart?
She too, she too, has loved and lost; and though
She turned last night in disdain
Away from the sunset-embers,
From her soul she can never depart;
She can never depart from her pain.
Vainly she strives to forget;
Beautiful in her woe,
She awakes in the dawn and remembers.*

THE SWIMMERS' RACE.

BETWEEN the clover and the trembling sea
 They stand upon the golden-shadowed shore
 In naked boyish beauty, a strenuous three,
 Hearing the breakers' deep Olympic roar ;
 Three young athletes poised on a forward limb,
 Mirrored like marble in the smooth wet sand,
 Three statues moulded by Praxiteles :
 The blue horizon rim
 Recedes, recedes upon a lovelier land,
 And England melts into the skies of Greece.

II.

The dome of heaven is like one drop of dew,
 Quivering and clear and cloudless but for one
 Crisp bouldered Alpine range that blinds the blue
 With snowy gorges glittering to the sun :

Forward the runners lean, with outstretched hand
Waiting the word—ah, how the light relieves
The silken rippling muscles as they start
Spurning the yellow sand,
Then skimming lightlier till the goal receives
The winner, head thrown back and lips apart.

III.

Now at the sea-marge on the sand they lie
At rest for a moment, panting as they breathe,
And gazing upward at the unbounded sky
While the sand nestles round them from beneath ;
And in their hands they gather up the gold
And through their fingers' let it lazily stream
Over them, dusking all their limbs' fair white,
Blotting their shape and mould,
Till, mixed into the distant gazer's dream
Of earth and heaven, they seem to sink from sight.

IV.

But one, in seeming petulance, oppressed
With heat has cast his brown young body free :
With arms behind his head and heaving breast
He lies and gazes at the cool bright sea ;

So young Leander might when in the noon
He panted for the starry eyes of eve
And whispered o'er the waste of wandering waves,
"Hero, bid night come soon!"
Nor knew the nymphs were waiting to receive
And kiss his pale limbs in their cold sea-caves.

v.

Now to their feet they leap and, with a shout,
Plunge through the glittering breakers without fear,
Breast the green-arching billows, and still out,
As if each dreamed the arms of Hero near;
Now like three sunbeams on an emerald crest,
Now like three foam-flakes melting out of sight,
They are blent with all the glory of all the sea;
One with the golden West;
Merged in a myriad waves of mystic light
As life is lost in immortality.

THE VENUS OF MILO.

I.

BACKWARD she leans, as when the rose unblown
 Slides white from its warm sheath some morn in
 May !
 Under the sloping waist, aslant, her zone
 Clings as it slips in tender disarray ;
 One knee, out-thrust a little, keeps it so
 Lingering ere it fall ; her lovely face
 Gazes as o'er her own Eternity !
 Those armless radiant shoulders, long ago
 Perchance held arms out wide with yearning grace
 For Adon by the blue Sicilian sea.

II.

No ; thou eternal fount of these poor gleams,
 Bright axle-star of the wheeling temporal skies,
 Daughter of blood and foam and deathless dreams,
 Mother of flying Love that never dies,

To thee, the topmost and consummate flower,
The last harmonic height, our dull desires
And our tired souls in dreary discord climb ;
The flesh forgets its pale and wandering fires ;
We gaze through heaven as from an ivory tower
Shining upon the last dark shores of Time.

III.

White culmination of the dreams of earth,
Thy splendour beacons to a loftier goal,
Where, slipping earthward from the great new birth,
The shadowy senses leave the essential soul !
Oh, naked loveliness, not yet revealed,
A moment hence that falling robe will show
No prophecy like this, this great new dawn,
The bare bright breasts, each like a soft white shield,
And the firm body like a slope of snow
Out of the slipping dream-stuff half withdrawn.

THE NET OF VULCAN.

FROM peaks that clove the heavens asunder
The hunchback god with sooty claws
Loomed o'er the night, a cloud of thunder,
And hurled the net of mortal laws ;
It flew, and all the world grew dimmer ;
Its blackness blotted out the stars,
Then fell across the rosy glimmer
That told where Venus couched with Mars.

And, when the steeds that draw the morning
Spurned from their Orient hooves the spray,
All vainly soared the lavrock, warning
Those tangled lovers of the day :
Still with those twin white waves in blossom,
Against the warrior's rock-broad breast,
The netted light of the foam-born bosom
Breathed like a sea at rest.

And light was all that followed after,
✓ Light the derision of the sky,
Light the divine Olympian laughter
Of kindlier gods in days gone by :
Low to her lover whispered Venus,
“ The shameless net be praised for this—
When night herself no more could screen us
It snared us one more hour of bliss.”

THE RIDE OF PHAËTHON

FORTH, from the portals, flow the four immortal steeds
Tossing the splendour of their manes,
While the dazzled Phaëthon reels o'er the flashing
golden wheels
Grasping the fourfold reins.

17

Ah, beneath the burning hooves how the darkness
cowers down
As the great steeds mount and soar ;
How the twilight springs away from the wheels like
spray
And the night like a battle-broken host is driven
before.

III.

And swifter now, ah swift, as the eight great shoulders
lift

. And leap up the rolling sky,

And the steeds in whitest glory ramp and trample on
the night

And the quivering haunches thrust, they mount and
fly.

IV.

Ah, the beauty of their scorn! How the blood-red
nostrils burn,

Breathing out the dawn and the day;

How the long cloud ranks foam in fury from their flanks,
And the heavens for their hooves make way.

V.

And higher now and higher, thro' a sea of cloudy fire
The chariot sways and swings,

And the heart of Phaëthon leaps, as up the radiant
steeps

They surge, and drunk with triumph, he lifts his head
and sings.

VI.

He sings, he sways and reels o'er the flashing golden
wheels,
For he sees far, far below,
The little dwindling earth and the land that gave him
birth
And the Northlands white with snow.

VII.

And he shakes the maddened reins o'er the gleaming
seas and plains
And the chariot swings and sways,
Swifter, swifter he would fly than the Master of the sky,
The Lord of the sunbeams and bays.

VIII.

And each high immortal steed that had never known
the need
Of Apollo's lash or goad,
Tossed the cataract of its mane o'er its quivering croup
again
And ramped on the sun-bright road.

IX.

*Beautiful, insolent, fierce,
For an instant, a whirlwind of radiance,
Tossing their manes,
Rampant over the dazzled universe
They struggled, while Phaethon, Phaethon, tugged at the
reins.*

X.

Then, like a torrent, a tempest of splendour, a hurricane
rapture of wrath and derision
Down they galloped, a great white thunder of glory,
down the terrible sky ;
Till earth with her rivers and seas and meadows
broadened and filled up the field of their vision,
And mountains leapt from the plains to meet them,
and all the forests and fields drew nigh.

XI.

All the bracken and grass of the mountains flamed and
the valleys of corn were wasted,
All the blossoming forests of Africa withered and
shrivelled beneath their flight ;

Then, then first, those ambrosial Edens of old by the
wheels of the Sun were blasted,
Leaving a dead Sahara, lonely, burnt and blackened
to greet the night.

XII.

Upward they swerved and swooped once more, the great
white steeds, outstretched at a gallop,
The round earth dwindled beneath their flight, the
mighty chariot swayed and swung
Under the feet of the charioteer, it swung and swayed
as a storm-swept shallop
Tosses and leaps in the seas, and Phaethon, cowering,
close to the sides of it clung.

XIII.

For now to the stars, to the stars, they surged, and the
earth was a dwindling gleam thereunder,
Yea, now to the home of the Father of gods and he
rose in the wrath that none can quell,
Beholding the mortal charioteer, and the rolling heavens
were rent with his thunder,
And Phaëthon, smitten, reeled from the chariot! Back-
ward and out of it, headlong, he fell.

XIV.

Down, down, down, down from the glittering heights of
the firmament hurled

Like a falling star, in a circle of fire, down the sheer
abysm of doom,

Down to the hiss and the heave of the seas far out on
the ultimate verge of the world,

That leapt with a roar to meet him, he fell and they
covered him o'er with their glorious gloom,

Covered him deep with their rolling gloom,
Their depths of pitiful gloom.

NIOBE.

- How like the sky she bends above her child,
 ✓ One with the great horizon of her pain !
 No sob from our low seas where woe runs wild,
 No weeping cloud, no momentary rain,
 Can mar the heaven-high visage of her grief,
 That frozen anguish, proud, majestic, dumb !
 She stoops in pity above the labouring earth,
 Knowing how fond, how brief
 Is all its hope, past, present, and to come,
 She stoops in pity, and yearns to assuage its dearth.
- Through that fair face the whole dark universe
 ✓ Speaks, as a thorn-tree speaks thro' one white flower ;
 And all those wrenched Promethean souls that curse
 The gods but cannot die before their hour,
 Find utterance in her beauty. That fair head
 Bows over all earth's graves. It was her cry
 Men heard in Rama when the twisted ways
 With children's blood ran red !
 ✓ Her silence utters all the sea would sigh ;
 And, in her face, the whole earth's anguish prays.

It is the pity, the pity of human love
That strains her face, upturned to meet the doom,
And her deep bosom, like a snow-white dove
Frozen upon its nest, ne'er to resume
Its happy breathing o'er the golden brace
Whose fostering was her death. Ay, death alone
Can break the anguished horror of that spell !
The sorrow on her face
Is sealed : the living flesh is turned to stone ;
She knows all, all, that Life and Time can tell.

Ah, yet, her woman's love, so vast, so tender ;
Her woman's body, hurt by every dart ;
Braving the thunder, still, still hide the slender
Soft frightened child beneath her mighty heart !
She is all one mute immortal cry, one brief
Infinite pang of such victorious pain
That she transcends the heavens and bows them
down !
The majesty of grief
~~Is~~ hers, and her dominion must remain
Eternal. God nor man usurps that crown.

ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE.

I.

CLOUD upon cloud, the purple pinewoods clung to the
rich Arcadian mountains,

Holy-sweet as a column of incense, where Eurydice
roamed and sung :

All the hues of the gates of heaven flashed from the
white enchanted fountains

Where in the flowery glades of the forests the rivers
that sing to Arcadia sprung.

White as a shining marble Dryad, supple and sweet as
a rose in blossom,

Fair and fleet as a fawn that shakes the dew from the
fern at break of day,

Wreathed with the clouds of her dusky hair that kissed
and clung to her sun-bright bosom,

Down to the valley she came, and the sound of her
feet was the bursting of flowers in May.

Down to the valley she came, for far and far below in
the dreaming meadows

Pleaded ever the Voice of voices, calling his love by
her golden name ;

So she arose from her home in the hills, and down through
the blossoms that danced with their shadows,

Out of the blue of the dreaming distance, down to
the heart of her lover she came.

Red were the lips that hovered above her lips in the
flowery haze of the June-day :

(Red as a rose through the perfumed mist of passion
that reeled before her eyes ;

Strong the smooth young sunburnt arms that folded her
heart to his heart in the noon-day,

Strong and supple with throbbing sunshine under the
blinding southern skies.

Ah, the kisses, the little murmurs, mad with pain for
their phantom fleetness,

Mad with pain for the passing of love that lives, they
dreamed—as we dream—for an hour !

Ah, the sudden tempest of passion, mad with pain for
its over-sweetness,

As petal by petal and pang by pang their love broke
out into perfect flower.

Ah, the wonder as once he wakened, out of a dream of
remembered blisses,
Couched in the meadows of dreaming blossom to
feel, like the touch of a flower on his eyes,
Cool and fresh with the fragrant dew of dawn the
touch of her light swift kisses,
Shed from the shadowy rose of her face between his
face and the warm blue skies.

II.

Lost in his new desire
He dreamed away the hours ;
His lyre
Lay buried in the flowers :

To whom the King of Heaven,
Apollo, lord of light,
Had given
Such beauty, love, and might :

Might, if he would, to slay
All evil dreams and pierce
The grey
Veil of the Universe ;

With Love that holds in one
Sacred and ancient bond

 The sun
And all the vast beyond

And Beauty to enthrall
The soul of man to heaven :
 Yea, all
Such gifts was Orpheus given.

*Yet in his dream's desire
He drownd away the hours :
 His lyre
Lay buried in the flowers.*

Then in his wrath arose
Apollo, lord of light,
 That shows
The wrong deed from the right ;

And by what radiant laws
O'erruling human needs,
 The cause
To consequence proceeds ;

How balanced is the sway
He gives each mortal doom :
 How day
Demands the atoning gloom :

How all good things await
The soul that pays the price
 To Fate
By equal sacrifice ;

And how on him that sleeps
For less than labour's sake
 There creeps,
Uncharmed, the Pythian snake.

III.

Lulled by the wash of the feathery grasses, a sea with
 many a sun-swept billow,
Heart to heart in the heart of the summer, lover by
 lover asleep they lay,
Hearing only the whirring cicada that chirruped awhile
 at their popped pillow
Faint and sweet as the murmur of men that laboured
 in villages far away.

Was not the menace indeed more silent? Ah, what
care for labour and sorrow?

Gods in the meadows of moly and amaranth surely
might envy their deep sweet bed

Here where the butterflies troubled the lilies of peace,
and took no thought for the morrow,

And golden-girdled bees made feast as over the
lotos the soft sun spread.

Nearer, nearer the menace glided, out of the gorgeous
gloom around them,

Out of the poppy-haunted shadows deep in the
heart of the purple brake;

Till through the hush and the heat as they lay, and
their own sweet listless dreams enwound them,—

Mailed and mottled with hues of the grape-bloom
suddenly, quietly, glided the snake.

Subtle as jealousy, supple as falsehood, diamond-headed
and cruel as pleasure,

Coil by coil he lengthened and glided, straight to
the fragrant curve of her throat:

There in the print of the last of the kisses that still
glowed red from the sweet long pressure,

Fierce as famine and swift as lightning over the
glittering lyre he smote.

IV.

And over the cold white body of love and delight
Orpheus arose in the terrible storm of his grief,
With quivering up-clutched hands, deadly and white, ,
And his whole soul wavered and shook like a wind-
swept leaf :

As a leaf that beats on a mountain, his spirit in
vain
Assaulted his doom and beat on the Gates of
Death :
Then prone with his arms o'er the lyre he sobbed
out his pain,
And the tense chords faintly gave voice to the
pulse of his breath.

And he heard it and rose, once again, with the lyre
in his hand,
And smote out the cry that his white-lipped sorrow
denied :
And the grief's mad ecstasy swept o'er the summer-
sweet land,
And gathered the tears of all Time in the rush of
its tide.

There was never a love forsaken or faith forsworn,
 There was never a cry for the living or moan for
 the slain,
 But was voiced in that great consummation of song ;
 ay, and borne
 To storm on the Gates of the land whence none
 cometh again.

Transcending the barriers of earth, comprehending them
 all,
 He followed the soul of his loss with the night in
 his eyes ;
 And the portals lay bare to him there ; and he heard
 the faint call
 'Of his love o'er the rabble that wails by the river
 of sighs.

Yea, there in the mountains before him, he knew it
 of old,
 That portal enormous of gloom, he had seen it in
 dreams,
 When the secrets of Time and of Fate through his
 harmonies rolled ;
 And behind it he heard the dead moan by their
 desolate streams.

And he passed through the Gates with the light and
the cloud of his song,

Dry-shod over Lethe he passed to the chasms of
hell ;

And the hosts of the dead made mock at him, crying,
How long

*Have we dwelt in the darkness, oh fool, and shall
evermore dwell ?*

Did our lovers not love us ? the grey skulls hissed in
his face ;

*Were our lips not red ? Were these cavernous eyes
not bright ?*

*Yet us, whom the soft flesh, clothed with such roseate
grace,*

*Our lovers would loathe if we ever returned to their
sight !*

Oh then, through the soul of the Singer, a pity so
vast

Mixed with his anguish that, smiting anew on his
lyre,

He caught up the sorrows of hell in his utterance at
last,

Comprehending the need of them all in his own
great desire.

v.

And they that were dead, in his radiant music, heard
the moaning of doves in the olden
Golden-girdled purple pinewood, heard the moan
of the roaming sea ;
Heard the chant of the soft-winged songsters, nesting
now in the fragrant golden
Olden haunted blossoming bowers of lovers that
wandered in Arcady ;
Saw the soft blue veils of shadow floating over the
"billowy grasses
Under the crisp white curling clouds that sailed
and trailed through the melting blue ;
Heard once more the quarrel of lovers above them
pass, as a lark-song passes,
Light and bright, till it vanished away in an eye-
bright heaven of silvery dew.
nite as a dream of Aphrodite, supple and sweet as
a rose in blossom,
Fair and fleet as a fawn that shakes the dew from
the fern at break of day ;
Wreathed with the clouds of her dusky hair, that
kissed and clung to her sun-bright bosom,
On through the deserts of hell she came, and the
brown air bloomed with the light of May.

On through the deserts of hell she came ; for over
the fierce and frozen meadows
Pleaded ever the Voice of voices, calling his love
by her golden name ;
So she arose from her grave in the darkness, and up
through the wailing fires and shadows,
On by chasm and cliff and cavern, out of the
horrors of death she came.

Then had she followed him, then had he won her,
striking a chord that should echo for ever,
Had he been steadfast only a little, nor paused in
the great transcendent song ;
But ere they had won to the glory of day, he came
to the brink of the flaming river
And ceased, to look on his love a moment, a little
moment, and over-long.

v

O'er Phlegethon he stood :
Below him roared and flamed
The flood
For utmost anguish named.

And lo, across the night,
The shining form he knew
 With light
Swift footsteps upward drew.

Up through the desolate lands
She stole, a ghostly star,
 With hands
Outstretched to him afar.

With arms outstretched, she came
In yearning majesty,
 The same
Royal Eurydice.

Up through the ghastly dead
She came, with shining eyes
 And red
Sweet lips of child-surprise.

Up through the wizened crowds
She stole, as steals the moon
 Through clouds
Of flowery mist in June.

ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE.

He gazed : he ceased to smite
The golden-chorded lyre :

Delight

Consumed his heart with fire.

Though in that deadly land
His task was but half-done,
His hand
Drooped, and the fight half-won.

He saw the breasts that glowed,
The fragrant clouds of hair :
They flowed
Around him like a snare.

*O'er Phlegethon he stood,
For utmost anguish named :
The flood
Below him roared and flamed.*

Out of his hand the lyre
Suddenly slipped and fell
The fire
Acclaimed it into hell.

The night grew dark again :
There came a bitter cry
 Of pain,
Oh Love, once more I die !

And lo, the earth-dawn broke,
And like a wraith she fled :
 He woke
Alone : his love was dead.

He woke on earth : the day
Shone coldly : at his side
 There lay
The body of his bride.

VII.

Only now when the purple vintage bubbles and winks
 in the autumn glory,
Only now when the great white oxen drag the
 weight of the harvest home,
Sunburnt labourers, under the star of the sunset, sing
 as an old-world story
How, two pale and thwarted lovers ever through
 Arcady still must roam.

Faint as the silvery mists of morning over the peaks
that the noonday parches,
On through the haunts of the gloaming musk-rose,
down to the rivers that glisten below,
Ever they wander from meadow to pinewood, under
the whispering woodbine arches,
Faint as the mists of the dews of the dusk when
violets dream and the moon-winds blow.

Though the golden lute of Orpheus gathered the
splendours of earth and heaven,
All the golden greenwood notes and all the chimes
of the changing sea,
Old men over the fires of winter murmur again that
he was not given
The steadfast heart divine to rule that infinite
freedom of harmony.

Therefore he failed, say they; but we, that have no
wisdom, can only remember
How through the purple perfumed pinewoods white
Eurydice roamed and sung:
How through the whispering gold of the wheat, where
the poppy burned like a crimson ember,
Down to the valley in beauty she came, and under
her feet the flowers upsprung.

*Down to the valley she came, for far and far below
in the dreaming meadows*

*Pleaded ever the Voice of voices, calling his love by
her golden name ;*

*So she arose from her home in the hills, and down
through the blossoms that danced with their
shadows,*

*Out of the blue of the dreaming distance, down to
the heart of her lover she came.*

EARTH'S IMMORTALITIES.

No more, proud singers, boast no more !
 Your high immortal throne
 Will scarce outlast a king's !
 Time is a sea that hath no shore
 Wherein Death idly flings
 Your fame like some small pebble-stone
 That sinks to rise no more.

*Then boast no more, proud singers,
 Your high immortal throne !*

II.

This earth, this little grain of dust
 Drifting among the stars,
 With her invisible wars,
 Her love, her hate, her lust,

This microscopic ball
Whereof you scan a part so small,
Outlasts but little even your own poor dust.

*Then boast no more, proud singers,
Your high immortal throne !*

III.

That golden spark of light must die
Which now you call your sun !
Soon will its race be run
Around its trivial sky !
What hand shall then unroll
Dead Maro's little golden scroll
When earth and sun in one wide charnel lie.

*Then boast no more, proud singers !
Your high immortal throne
Will scarce outlast a king's !*

THE LAST OF THE TITANS.

OVER what seemed a gulf of glimmering sea,
Huger than hugest Himalay, arose
Atlas, on weary shoulders heaving dark
The burden of the heavens, the heavy broad
Empurpled floors o' the roseate golden realm
Unseen, where gods like living light in light
Moved and forgot the sorrows of the world.
And his drooped head was bowed into the gloom,
Bowed like a mountain, crushing on his breast
A clotted beard of many pinewoods. Dark,
Immeasurably dark his body's bulk
Sank thro' the gulfs of space ; but pale as death
His face gleamed over Africa, his face
A mask of living marble, bending down
Eyes like deep wells of soft compassionate gloom.
His cheeks were furrowed and writhen like rain-washed
crag
With fierce ravines of long and age-long tears
Whereon the pale procession of the stars

That round him moved in mockery sometimes cast
A dreary light of anguish ; but sometimes
The white clouds glimmering crept to comfort him
And to be comforted, by shutting out
The keen oppression of those glittering ranks
And dread eternities. They crept like sheep
Round some Titanic shepherd. In his breast
They nestled , but whene'er his mighty hands
In love would draw them closer, they escaped,
Eluded the fond clasp, as dreams, as dreams,
And, ever drawing nigh him all night long,
Wandered away for ever as they came.
Beneath him, like a tawny panther-skin
The great Sahara slept : beyond it lay
Parcelled and plotted out like tiny fields
The princedoms and the kingdoms of this earth,
Mountains like frozen wrinkles on a sea,
And seas like rain-pools in a rutted road
Dwindling beneath his loneliness. Above
The chariots of ten thousand thousand suns
Conspired to make him lonelier and rolled
Their flaming wheels remote, so that they seemed,
E'en Alioth and Fomalhaut, no more
Than dust of diamonds in the abysmal gloom.
So from a huger loneliness he gazed
Over the world where, faint as morning mists

Drifting thro' shadowy battles on the hills,
Drifting thro' many a pageant touched with red,
Cities of men and nations passed away.

But once, from out a crimson glooming dawn,
A light appeared as of a distant star
Flying towards him, growing as it came ;
Till now it seemed a naked youth upborne
On silver dove-winged sandals, like a god.
Then, then as moans the thunder through the night
The heart of Atlas moaned—"Why art thou come
To look upon my sorrow? Nay, I know,
Perseus, thou son of the everlasting gods,
I know thee who thou art! Why comest thou
To mock me with the sight of that high hope
Which Atlas never knew? Why comest thou thus
In youth and beauty through the crimson dawn?"

And Perseus answered gently, as a man
Speaking to one in pain: "I did not come
To mock thee, lord. I come to seek and pluck
The heart from out the land without a name,
The land without any order, where the light
Is even as darkness. I would seek and slay
Medusa, her whose foul enchantments draw
Man's heart into the abominable pit

Strangled and"—then that other—"Many a man,
Yea, many a hero have I seen go by
The glory of whose face was like a god's
Upon that quest ; but I have never seen
The face of one returning. Knowest thou not,
So terrible is the tempest of her beauty
That, if thine eyes but look upon her face,
Thy flesh and soul shall stiffen into stone?
Her breasts are girt about with triple brass
Against all mortal steel." And Perseus—"Yea,
I know ; but she—the brightest queen of heaven,
Athena, gave me mine immortal sword,
The sword of knowledge, that can shear through
brass

And triple steel as lightning cleaves the night.
Athena gave me mine immortal shield,
The shield of truth ; and, mirrored in that gleam,
The face of even Medusa hath no power
To hurt me. I will look not on her face
Save in the shield of truth. I shall not smite her
Save with the sword of knowledge, bathed in heaven.
I pray thee show me now that bitter road,
My death-road as thou sayest, for I will go
And triumph and return." And Atlas said,
"Yea, if I show thee, Perseus, wilt thou give
One grace on thy return, one gift of grace

To me world-wearied. I desire to rest ;
I am weary of bearing this exceeding weight
Of gloom eternal, weary of searching heaven
With prayers for pity, weary of knowledge, weary
Of watching little men, a little hour
Beneath the pondering of prodigious heavens,
Contend like ants for little molehill realms
And glow-worm glories, crowns contemptible ;
But thou canst give me peace—if thou return.
Swear now ; and I will tell thee when thou comest ;
But swear as thou dost love thy fatherland
Thou'lt not deny me this." And Perseus took
That oath ; and Atlas pointed out the road
Across the shapeless land without a name.

White as a snow-flake on the weird black wings
Of many a wind fulfilled with hideous dreams,
Misshapen horrors of the ultimate gloom
He flew, till as they gaped with threatening jaws
Of flame around his path he donned the helm
Wrung from the realms of Pluto, the dark helm
Wrought in the lands of death, which whoso wears
Is bodiless and invisible as the soul
That hath gone over Lethe. Him no more
Can death affright or mortal doom affray. •

League after league he sped till from the depths
Of nether darkness came a great soft sound
Of breathing, like the breathing of the sea ;
And, shuddering, he upheld the polished shield
And gazed on it as on some magic moon
Wherein he saw the glimmering world below
Mirrored, beheld what none hath ever seen
And lived, since the beginning of the world.
“O, horrible,” he moaned, “O, beautiful,
Beautiful hell” ; for in the shield he saw
Upon what seemed a plain of steaming filth
A Titan woman, lying supine and white,
White as a fallen column of some huge
Temple of Ombos, hugest city of earth ;
Her body a field of lilies and her breasts
Two snowy hillocks tipt with crimson dawn ;
Her flank a marble buttress beautiful
Couched in the foul abyss ; her regal face
Calm with the leonine languor of the Sphinx.
On either side, close huddled to her flank,
Dimmed with the steam wherethrough she glimmered
pale
A dark shape, indistinguishable bulk
Of horror, couched with laps and folds of skin
Like those that wrap Behemoth ; and sometimes,

Like the fierce flashing of a wrecker's fire,
There came a glint of brazen claws and wings.
All round them like a forest swept the deep
Empurpled masses of her tangled hair.
Anon with slow and sleepy crimson lips,
Bright as with blood of heroes, her face turned
Smiling to greet each horror with a kiss ;
And, as she turned, her beauty's palace heaved
One rosy marble buttress from the filth
Luxuriously a little : the other sank
And wallowed deeper. Suddenly her eyes
Opened in child-like innocence. The dark
Mass of her hair shook round her like a sea,
Its purple clouds all clotted and congealed,
And lo, the primal serpents of the slime,
Huger than Python, hissing, upward curled,
And floated round her, coil on heavy coil,
Beautiful in their horror as they cast
Shadows like grape-bloom o'er her marble face
And swayed their bloated throats. But at that sound
Young Perseus gripped the bright immortal sword
Which grave grey-eyed Athena gave him, gazed
Steadfastly on the shield and floated down
Quietly as a star-beam into hell.
Then with one prayer to the everlasting gods,
Across the roseate hollow of her throat

He smote! The immortal blade like light through
darkness

Flashed, and the blood rolled hissing o'er the filth
And, wheresoe'er it curled, a serpent rose
Hissing agape. Then with one hideous clap
Of thunder, those two monstrous bulks arose
Mountainous, like two foul prodigious swine,
From out their wallowing beds i' the clinging mire
And from what seemed their eyes a ruddy light
Of vengeance flashed, as of wild crimson torches
Far-sunken in a thick and savage wood,
Yet imminent; but Perseus, with one hand
Clutching the tangled gloom of that dire head,
Soared upward, and the silver sandals bore
The hero and his burden far away.

And though with heavy clang of brazen wings
The Gorgons followed, soon they dropped behind
And loomed no larger than two carrion-flies
Against the red horizon, and ere long
Decayed from sight. And onward Perseus came
Triumphantly, a light upon his face
As of a god returning, till he saw
The mighty shoulders of the world-worn king
Atlas, above what seemed a glimmering sea.
Then like a low deep thunder his last cry
Burst from the Titan's lips, "O, art thou come,

Perseus, thou son of the everlasting gods !
My burden is wellnigh more than I can bear !
Lift up the head and let me look upon it ! ”
And up to the grim worn face, furrowed with tears,
He sped, according to his vow, and raised
The cold head of Medusa, which no man
Had seen and lived ; and Atlas looked
With weary hungering eyes upon her face.
And in one breath he found his vast desire ;
For lo, a granite sleep, an iron rest,
An everlasting quiet sealed his eyes ;
His face grew grayer and colder than the crags
Of Caucasus : his eyes were turned to stone ;
His cheeks were furrowed and writhen rain-washed
crag,
And his drooped head was bowed into the gloom,
A granite mountain, crushing on its breast
A clotted beard of many pinewoods. Still
Round him the clouds like wandering flocks of sheep
Around some mighty shepherd creeping close
Nestled against his breast ; and all was peace.

FORTY SINGING SEAMEN.

"In our lands be Beeres and Lyons of dyvers colours as ye redd, grene, black, and white. And in our land be also unicornes and these Unicornes slee many Lyons. . . . Also there dare no man make a lye in our lande, for if he dyde he sholde incontynent be sleyn."—*Mediæval Epistle of Pope Prester John*

ACROSS the seas of Wonderland to Mogadore we
plodded,

Forty singing seamen in an old black barque,
And we landed in the twilight where a Polyphemus
nodded

With his battered moon-eye winking red and yellow
through the dark !

For his eye was growing mellow,
Rich and ripe and red and yellow,

As was time, since old Ulysses made him bellow
in the dark !

Cho.—Since Ulysses bunged his eye up with a pine-
torch in the dark !

II.

Were they mountains in the gloaming or the giant's
ugly shoulders

Just beneath the rolling eyeball, with its bleared
and vinous glow,

Red and yellow o'er the purple of the pines among
the boulders

And the shaggy horror brooding on the sullen slopes
below,

Were they pines among the boulders

Or the hair upon his shoulders?

We were only simple seamen, so of course we didn't
know.

Cho.—We were simple singing seamen, so of course we
couldn't know.

III.

But we crossed a plain of poppies, and we came upon a
fountain

Not of water, but of jewels, like a spray of leaping
fire;

And behind it, in an emerald glade, beneath a golden
mountain

There stood a crystal palace, for a sailor to admire;

For a troop of ghosts came round us,
Which with leaves of bay they crowned us,
Then with grog they wellnigh drowned us, to the depth
of our desire !

Cho.—And 'twas very friendly of them, as a sailor can
admire !

IV.

There was music all about us, we were growing quite
forgetful

We were only singing seamen from the dirt of London-
town,

Though the nectar that we swallowed seemed to vanish
half regretful

As if we wasn't good enough to take such vittles
down,

When we saw a sudden figure,

Tall and black as any nigger,

Like the devil—only bigger—drawing near us with
a frown !

Cho.—Like the devil—but much bigger—and he wore
a golden crown !

V.

And "what's all this?" he growls at us! With dignity
we chaunted,

"Forty singing seamen, sir, as won't be put upon!"
"What? Englishmen?" he cries, "Well, if ye don't
mind being haunted,

Faith, you're welcome to my palace; I'm the famous
Prester John!

Will ye walk into my palace?

I don't bear 'ee any malice!

One and all ye shall be welcome in the halls of
Prester John!"

Cho.—So we walked into the palace and the halls of
Prester John!

VI.

Now the door was one great diamond and the hall a
hollow ruby—

Big as Beachy Head, my lads, nay bigger by a half!
And I sees the mate wi' mouth agape, a-staring like a
booby,

And the skipper close behind him, with his tongue
out like a calf!

Now the way to take it rightly
Was to walk along politely
Just as if you didn't notice—so I couldn't help but
laugh!

Cho.—For they both forgot their manners and the crew
was bound to laugh!

VII.

But he took us through his palace and, my lads, as
I'm a sinner,
We walked into an opal like a sunset - coloured
cloud—
“My dining-room,” he says, and, quick as light we saw
a dinner
Spread before us by the fingers of a hidden fairy
crowd;
And the skipper, swaying gently
After dinner, murmurs faintly,
“I looks to-wards you, Prester John, you've done us
very proud!”

Cho.—And we drank his health with honours, for he
done us *very* proud!

VIII.

Then he walks us to his garden where we sees a
feathered demon

Very splendid and important on a sort of spicy tree !
"That's the Phoenix," whispers Prester, "which all
edicated seamen

Knows the only one existent, and *he's* waiting for
to flee !

When his hundred years expire

Then he'll set hisself a-fire

And another from his ashes rise most beautiful to
see ! "

Cho.—With wings of rose and emerald most beautiful
to see !

IX.

Then he says, "In yonder forest there's a little silver
river,

And whosoever drinks of it, his youth shall never
die !

The centuries go by, but Prester John endures for ever

With his music in the mountains and his magic on
the sky !

While *your* hearts are growing colder,
 While your world is growing older,
 There's a magic in the distance, where the sea-line
 meets the sky."

Cho.—It shall call to singing seamen till the fount o'
 song is dry!

X.

So we thought we'd up and seek it, but that forest fair
 defied us,—

First a crimson leopard laughs at us most horrible
 to see,

Then a sea-green lion came and sniffed and licked his
 chops and eyed us,

While a red and yellow unicorn was dancing round a
 tree!

We was trying to look thinner,
 Which was hard, because our dinner

Must ha' made us very tempting to a cat o' high
 degree!

Cho.—Must ha' made us very tempting to the whole
 • menanjeree!

XI.

So we scuttled from that forest and across the poppy-
meadows

Where the awful shaggy horror brooded o'er us in
the dark!

And we pushes out from shore again a-jumping at our
shadows

And pulls away most joyful to the old black barque!

And home again we plodded

While the Polyphemus nodded

With his battered moon-eye winking red and yellow
through the dark.

Cho.—Oh, the moon above the mountains, red and
yellow through the dark!

XII.

Across the seas of Wonderland to London-town we
blundered,

Forty singing seamen as was puzzled for to know

If the visions that we saw was caused by—here again
we pondered—

A tippie in a vision forty thousand years ago.

Could the grog we *dreamt* we swallowed

Make us *dream* of all that followed?

We were only simple seamen, so of course we didn't
know!

Cho.—We were simple singing seamen, so of course we
could not know!

OLD JAPAN AT EARL'S COURT.

OF old Japan—how far away !—
We dreamed—how long ago !—
We saw by twisted creek and bay
The blue plum-blossoms blow,
And dragons coiling down below
Like dragons on a fan,
And pig-tailed sailors lurching slow
Thro' streets of old Japan.

II.

Who knows that land—that dim blue day
Where white tea-roses grow ?
Only a penny all the way
They cry in Pimlico :
The busses rumble to and fro,
Ah, catch one if you can,
And see the paper-lanterns glow
Thro' streets of old Japan.

III.

What need we more than youth and May
 To make our Miyako ?
 A chuckle from the cherry spray,
 A cherub's mocking crow,
 A sudden twang, a sweet swift throe
 As Daisy trips by Dan,
 And careless Cupid drops his bow
 And laughs—from old Japan.

IV.

*And there the cherry bough shall sway,
 The peach-bloom shed its snow,
 With scents and petals strewn astray
 Till night be sweet enow :
 Then lovers wander, whispering low
 As lovers only can,
 Where rosy paper-lanterns glow
 Through streets of old Japan.*

THE GOLDEN HYNDE.

It was on July 25 that, with a boldness we can hardly realise, the course was laid. Their instruments for finding latitude were far from perfect; longitude it was practically impossible for them to determine at all; the variation of the compass was ascertained with childish crudeness. But straight across the Pacific (for sixty-eight days without sight of land) Drake pushed his way as it were by inspiration.

WITH the fruit of Aladdin's garden clustering thick in
her hold,
With rubies a-wash in her scuppers and her bilge ablaze
with gold,
A world in arms behind her to sever her heart from
home,
The *Golden Hynde* drove onward, over the glittering
foam.

II.

If we go as we came by the Southward, we meet wi' the
fleets of Spain!
'Tis a thousand to one against us: we'll turn to the
West again;

We have captured a China pilot, his charts and his
golden keys ;

We'll sail to the Golden Gateway, over the golden seas.

III.

What shall we see as we sail there? Clusters of coral
and palm, -

Oceans of silken slumber, measureless leagues of
calm,

Islands of purple story, lit with the westering gleam,
Washed with the mystic whisper, dreaming the world-
wide dream.

IV.

There will be shores of sirens, with arms that beckon
us near,

As they stand knee-deep in the foam-flowers with peril-
ous breasts and hair ;

Sweet is the rest they proffer, yet what should we gain
of these

When we gaze on the Golden Gateway, that shines on
the golden seas?

V.

Wound in their white embraces, couched in the lustrous gloom,
Gazing ever to seaward through the broad magnolia bloom,
We should weary of all their kisses when, under the first white star,
Over the limitless ocean, the Golden Gates unbar.

VI.

White hands will strive to hold us ; but we must rise and go—
Down to the salt sea-beaches where the waves are whispering low ;
White arms will plead in anguish, as the sails fill out to the breeze,
And we turn to the Golden Gateway that burns on the golden seas.

VII.

We shall put out from shore then ; out to the Western skies,
With the old despairing rapture and the sunsê in our eyes :

What shall we gain of our going? What of the fading
gleam,
What of the gathering darkness, what of the dying
dream?

VIII.

Only the unknown glory, only the hope deferred,
Only the wondrous whisper, only the unknown Word,
Voice of the God that gave us billow and beam and
breeze,
As we sail to the Golden Gateway, over the golden
seas.

FROM THE SHORE.

Love, so strangely lost and found,
Love, beyond the seas of death,
Love, immortally re-crowned,
Love, who swayest this mortal breath,
Sweetlier to thy lover's ear
Steals the tale that ne'er was told ;
Bright-eyes, ah, thine arms are near,
Nearer now than e'er of old.

When on earth thy hands were mine,
Mine to hold for evermore,
Oft we watched the sunset shine
Lonely from this wave-beat shore ;
Pent in prison-cells of clay,
Time had power on thee and me :
Thou and heaven are one to-day,
One with earth and sky and sea ;

Indivisible and one !

Beauty hath unlocked the Gate,
Oped the portals of the sun,

Burst the bars of Time and Fate !
Violets in the dawn of Spring

Hold the secret of thine eyes :
Lilies bare their breasts and fling
Scents of thee from Paradise.

Brooklets have thy talk by rote ;
Thy farewells array the West ;
Fur that clasped thee round the throat
Leaps—a squirrel—to its nest !
Backward from a sparkling eye
Half-forgotten jests return
Where the rabbit lollops by
Hurry-scurry through the fern !

Roses where I lonely pass
Brush my brow and breathe thy kiss :
Zephyrs, whispering through the grass,
Lure me on from bliss to bliss :
Here thy robe is rustling close,
There thy fluttering lace is blown,—
All the tide of beauty flows
Tributary to thine own.

Birds that sleek their shining throats
Capture every curve from thee :
All their golden warbled notes,
Fragments of thy melody,
Crowding, clustering, one by one,
Build it upward, spray by spray,
Till the lavrock in the sun
Pours thy rapture down the day.

Silver birch and purple pine,
Crumpled fern and crimson rose,
Flash to feel their beauty thine,
Clasp and fold thee, warm and close :
Every beat and gleam of wings
Holds thee in its bosom furled ;
All that chatters, laughs, and sings,
Darts thy sparkle round the world.

*Love, so strangely lost and found,
Love, beyond the seas of death,
Love, immortally re-crowned,
Love, who swayest this mortal breath,
Sweetlier to thy lover's ear
Steals the tale that ne'er was told ;
Bright-eyes, ah, thine arms are near, °
Nearer now than e'er of old.*

THE RETURN.

O, HEDGES white with laughing may,
O, meadows where we met,
This heart of mine will break to-day
Unless ye, too, forget.

Breathe not so sweet, breathe not so sweet,
But swiftly let me pass
Across the fields that felt her feet
In the old time that was.

A year ago, but one brief year,
O, happy flowering land,
We wandered here and whispered there,
And hand was warm in hand.

O, crisp white clouds beyond the hill,
O, layrock in the skies,
Why do ye all remember still
Her bright uplifted eyes.

Red heather on the windy moor,
Wild thyme beside the way,
White jasmine by the cottage door,
Harden your hearts to-day.

Smile not so kind, smile not so kind,
Thou happy haunted place,
Or thou wilt strike these poor eyes blind
With her remembered face.

E TENEBRIS.

INTO the keeping of death
I commend my love,
Into the gloom of the grave
And the lasting sleep !
Yet there is hope, one saith,
In some glory above,
For the broken, the broken wave
That is lost in the deep.

O, I know not their meaning at all,
They speak idly to me,
Who say that the lost things return
As day followeth night !
I watch the leaves fall
And waves break on the sea,
And the strange skies that burn
With the stranger day's light.

Shall I care if another day greet me
In crimson and gold,
Though the skies be still blue,
When the eyes that were kind
Flash no longer to meet me
As of old, as of old,
With a love that was true,
Or a dream that was blind?

I have no hope, no faith,
No desire any more,
That the last year's flower
Should return to the spray :
Spring cometh, Spring cometh, one saith ;
But who shall restore
Just the one perished hour
Of that one perished May?

REMEMBRANCE.

O, UNFORGOTTEN lips, grey haunting eyes,
 Soft curving cheeks and heart-remembered brow,
 It is all true, the old love never dies ;
 And, parted, we must meet for ever now.

We did not think it true ! We did not think
 Love meant this universal cry of pain,
 This crown of thorn, this vinegar to drink,
 This lonely crucifixion o'er again.

Yet through the darkness of the sleepless night
 Your tortured face comes meekly answering mine ;
 Dumb, but I know why those mute lips are white ;
 Dark, but I know why those dark lashes shine.

O, love, love, love, and what if this should be
 For ever now, through God's Eternity ?

A PRAYER.

ONLY a little, O Father, only to rest
 Or ever the night comes and the eternal sleep,
 Only to rest for a little, a little to weep
 In the dead love's pitiful arms, on the dead love's breast,

A little to loosen the frozen fountains, to free
 Rivers of blood and tears that should slacken the
 pulse
 Of this pitiless heart, and appease these pangs that
 convulse
 Body and soul ; oh, out of Eternity,

A moment to whisper, only a moment to tell
 My dead, my dead, what words are so helpless to
 say—
 The dreams unuttered, the prayers no passion could
 pray,
 And then—the eternal sleep or the pains of hell,

I could welcome them, Father, gladly as ever a child
Laying his head on the pillow might turn to his rest
And remember in dreams, as the hand of the mother
is prest
On his hair, how the Pitiful blessed him of old and
smiled.

HEINE'S DREAM.

IN dreams my lost love comes to me,
In dreams, in dreams by night ;
But her kiss is a yearning agony,
Her face is wrung and white.

I feel the cold and quivering mouth
Cleave as in long past years ;
But O, the suffering and the drouth,
And the salt strange tears !

Come no more, come no more,
Often I wake and moan,
While the heart of the sea on the distant shore,
Breaks in the dark, alone.

Why wilt thou tear the deep old wound
Open in sleep anew,
O lips that I have kissed and found
So sweet and so untrue.

“Nay come, love, come in dreams to me,”
I turn and weep again :
Thy far-off world misuseth thee,
Thou art in pain, in pain.

EVE'S APPLE.

I.

WHEN you leant thro' the leaves with your slow red
smile and your ivory body bare,
Ah, what was the fruit you gathered that day, white
Eve with the dusky hair?

For we took it and ate it together and laughed! Your
white teeth bit to the core.
There was little to leave for the doves to peck, when
our delicate feast was o'er.

II.

The ripe fruit breathed of kisses, you said, as your
breasts white apples may;
But your body was cold from the coils of the snake
when you came to my arms that day.

There was blood, red blood on our lips, white Eve,
as we nibbled away in the sun ;

But I knew that the fruit was my heart, white Eve,
The red rent core of my heart, white Eve,

Which we gnawed and left for the rats, white Eve,
when our delicate feast was done.

THE REAL DANTE.

O LOVE, Love, Love, Death robbed me unaware,
 Undreaming that we ne'er should meet again,
 Else had one soul's infinity of pain
 Moated thee round with waves for Hell to dare.
 Yea, in that fight, even now, might I but share,
 Poor craven I, who yet on earth remain,
 Heaven, heaven itself should menace us in vain,
 Thy heart on mine, my lips upon thine hair.

I have lost courage, Love, in losing thee,
 Courage to bear this wonder of the sky,
 Courage to front that dark Eternity,
 Courage to brook life's pitiful riddle—*Why,*
Why hath God hurt us thus ? Poor broken cry •
 Quivering, unanswered, o'er the world's wide sea !

II.

And thou art sleeping on that silent shore,
And thou canst never, never once, return ;
• Not though the starved heart strain to thee and yearn,
And the lame hands reach upward and implore,
And the wrenched lips reiterate o'er and o'er
One thought wherewith the pitiless planets burn,
One lesson life is all too short to learn,
One simple sob of the soul—"No more ! no more !"

•

My life shall never learn it, come thou back ;
O, give the lie to all this dust hath said !
Come ; let the stars retrace their shining track,
Steal from that solemn midnight of the dead,
Though as a dream thou canst but pass me by,
Come, give my heart the strength to break and die.

AN OLD SONG ENDED.

(A NEW VERSION.)

*How should I your true love know
 From another one?—
 By his cockle-hat and staff
 And his sandal shoon.—*

Wherefore hath he roamed so far,
 Lady, from your hand? —
 Love's a pilgrim and he comes
 Out of Holy Land.—

Nay, but he is dead, lady,
 He is dead and gone!—
 Seek his grave and lay your face
 Down upon the stone.—

Shall I find him if he sleep
In a nameless grave,
Where over many and many an one
The tall wet grasses wave?—

Breathe my name whereas you go :
If you hear a sound
Struggling like a stifled cry
Underneath the ground,

Whisper but a word to him,
Tell him my despair :
If he riseth from the dead
Then my love is there.

LOVE'S GHOST.

Thy house is dark and still : I stand once more
 Beside the marble door.
 It opens as of old : thy pale, pale face
 Peers thro' the narrow space :
 Thy hands are mine, thy hands are mine to hold,
 Just as of old.

II.

"Hush ! hush ! or God will hear us ! Ah, speak low
 As Love spake long ago."
 "Sweet, sweet, are these thine arms, thy breast, thy hair
 Assuaging my despair,
 Assuaging the long thirst, quenching the tears
 Of all these years ?

III.

"Thy house is deep and still : God cannot hear ;
Sweet, have no fear !
Are not thy cold lips crushed against my kiss ?
Love gives us this,
Not God ;" but " ah," she moans, " God hears us ; speak,
Speak low, hide cheek on cheek."

IV.

Oh then what eager whisperings, hoarded long,
Sweeter than any song,
What treasured news to tell, what hopes, what fears,
Gleaned from the barren years,
What raptures wrung from out the heart of pain,
What wild farewells again !

V.

Whose pity is this ? Ah, quick, one kiss ! Once more
Closes the marble door !
I grope here in the darkness all alone
Across the cold white stone,
Over thy tomb, a sudden starlight gleams :
Death gave me this—in dreams.

ON A RAILWAY PLATFORM.

A DRIZZLE of drifting rain
And a blurred white lamp o'erhead,
That shines as my love will shine again
In the world of the dead.

Round me the wet black night,
And, afar in the limitless gloom,
Crimson and green, two blossoms of light,
Two stars of doom.

But the night of death is aflame
With a torch of back blown fire,
And the coal-black deeps of the quivering air
Rend for my soul's desire.

Leap, heart, for the pulse and the roar
And the lights of the streaming train
That leaps with the heart of thy love once more
Out of the mist and the rain.

Out of the desolate years
The thundering pageant flows ;
But I see no more than a window of tears
Which her face has turned to a rose.

OXFORD REVISITED.

TIMID and strange, like a ghost, I pass the familiar
portals,

Echoing now like a tomb, they accept me no more
as of old ;

Yet I go wistfully onward, a shade thro' a kingdom of
mortals

Wanting a face to greet me, a hand to grasp and to
hold.

Hardly I know as I go if the beautiful City is only

Mocking me under the moon, with its streams and
its willows a gleam,

Whether the City of friends or I that am friendless and
lonely,

Whether the boys that go by or the time-worn towers
be the dream ;

Whether the walls that I know, or the unknown fugitive
faces,

Faces like those that I loved, faces that haunt and
waylay,

Faces so like and unlike, in the dim unforgettable
places,

Startling the heart into sickness that aches with the
sweet of the May,—

Whether all these or the world with its wars be the
wandering shadows !

Ah, sweet over green-gloomed waters the may hangs,
crimson and white ;

And quiet canoes creep down by the warm gold dusk of
the meadows,

Lapping with little splashes and ripples of silvery
light.

Others like me have returned : I shall see the old faces
to-morrow,

Down by the gay-coloured barges, alert for the throb
of the oars,

Wanting to row once again, or tenderly jesting with
sorrow

Up the old stairways and noting the strange new
names on the doors.

Is it a dream? And I know not nor care if there be
an awaking

Ever at all any more, for the years that have torn
us apart,

Few, so few as they are, will ever be rending and
breaking :

Sooner by far than I knew have they wrought this
change for my heart !

Well ; I grow used to it now ! Could the dream but
remain and for ever,

With the flowers round the grey quadrangle laughing
as time grows old !

For the waters go down to the sea, but the sky still
gleams on the river !

We plucked them—but there shall be lilies, ivory
lilies and gold.

And still, in the beautiful City, the river of life is no
duller,

Only a little strange as the eighth hour dreamily
chimes,

In the City of friends and echoes, ribbons and music
and colour,

✓ Lilac and blossoming chestnut, willows and whispering
limes.

Over the Radcliffe Dome the moon as the ghost of a
flower

Weary and white awakes in the phantom fields of the
sky :

The trustful shepherded clouds are asleep over steeple
and tower,

Dark under Magdalen walls the Cher like a dream
goes by.

Back, we come wandering back, poor ghosts, to the
home that one misses

Out in the shelterless world, the world that was
heaven to us then,

Back from the coil and the vastness, the stars and the
boundless abysses,

Like monks from a pilgrimage stealing in bliss to
their cloisters again.

City of dreams that we lost, accept now the gift we
inherit—

Love, such a love as we knew not of old in the blaze
of our noon,

We that have found thee at last, half City, half heavenly
Spirit,

While over a mist of spires the sunset mellows the
moon.

THE THREE SHIPS.

(To an old Tune.)

As I went up the mountain-side,
The sea below me glittered wide,
And, Eastward, far away, I spied
 On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day,
The three great ships that take the tide
 On Christmas Day in the morning.

II.

Ye have heard the song, how these must ply
From the harbours of home to the ports o' the sky!
Do ye dream none knoweth the whither and why
 On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day,
The three great ships go sailing by
 On Christmas Day in the morning?

III.

Yet, as I live, I never knew
That ever a song could ring so true,
• Till I saw them break thro' a haze of blue
 On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day;
And the marvellous ancient flags they flew
 On Christmas Day in the morning!

IV.

From the heights above the belfried town
I saw that the sails were patched and brown,
But the flags were a-flame with a great renown
 On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day,
And on every mast was a golden crown
 On Christmas Day in the morning.

V.

Most marvellous ancient ships were these!
Were their prows a-plunge to the Chersonese?
For the pomp of Rome or the glory of Greece,
• On Christmas day, on Christmas Day,
Were they out on a quest for the Golden Fleece
 On Christmas Day in the morning?

VI.

And the sun and the wind they told me there
How goodly a load the three ships bear,
For the first is gold and the second is myrrh
 On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day ;
And the third is frankincense most rare
 On Christmas Day in the morning.

VII.

They have mixed their shrouds with the golden sky,
They have faded away where the last dreams die . . .
Ah yet, will ye watch, when the mist lifts high
 On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day ?
Will ye see three ships come sailing by
 On Christmas Day in the morning ?

SLUMBER-SONGS OF THE MADONNA.

PRELUDE.

DANTE saw the great white Rose
 Half unclosed ;
 Dante saw the golden bees
 Gathering from its heart of gold
 Sweets untold,
 Love's most honeyed harmonies.

Dante saw the threefold bow
 Strangely glow,
 Saw the Rainbow Vision rise,
 And the Flame that wore the crown
 Bending down
 O'er the flowers of Paradise.

Something yet remained, it seems ;
 In his dreams
 Dante missed—as angels may
 In their white and burning bliss—
 Some small kiss
 Mortals meet with every day.

Italy in splendour faints
 'Neath her saints !

O, her great Madonnas, too,
 Faces calm as any moon
 Glow in June,
 Hooded with the night's deep blue !

What remains ? I pass and hear
 Everywhere,
 Ay, or see in silent eyes
 Just the song she still would sing
 Thus—a-swing
 O'er the cradle where He lies.

Sleep, little baby, I love thee ;
 Sleep, little king, I am bending above thee !
 How should I know what to sing
 Here in my arms as I swing thee to sleep ?
 Hushaby low,
 Rockaby so,
 Kings may have wonderful jewels to bring,
 Mother has only a kiss for her king !
 Why should my singing so make me to weep ?
 Only I know that I love thee, I love thee,
 Love thee, my little one, sleep.

II.

Is it a dream ? Ah yet, it seems
 Not the same as other dreams !

I can but think that angels sang,
 When thou wast born, in the starry sky,
 And that their golden harps out-rang
 While the silver clouds went by !

The morning sun shuts out the stars,
 Which are much loftier than the sun ;
 But, could we burst our prison-bars
 And find the Light whence light begun,
 The dreams that heralded thy birth
 • Were truer than the truths of earth ;
 And, by that far immortal Gleam,
 Soul of my soul, I still would dream !

.

A ring of light was round thy head,
 The great-eyed oxen nigh thy bed
 Their cold and innocent noses bowed !
 Their sweet breath rose like an incense cloud
 In the blurred and mystic lanthorn light !

About the middle of the night
 The black door blazed like some great star
 With a glory from afar,
 Or like some mighty chrysolite
 Wherein an angel stood with white

Blinding arrowy bladed wings
 Before the throne of the King of kings ;
 And, through it, I could dimly see
 A great steed tethered to a tree.

Then, with crimson gems aflame
 Through the door the three kings came,
 And the black Ethiop unrolled
 The richly broidered cloth of gold,
 And poured forth before thee there
 Gold and frankincense and myrrh !

III.

See, what a wonderful smile ! Does it mean
 That my little one knows of my love ?
 Was it meant for an angel that passed unseen,
 And smiled at us both from above ?
 Does it mean that he knows of the birds and the
 flowers
 That are waiting to sweeten his childhood's hours,
 And the tales I shall tell and the games he will play,
 And the songs we shall sing and the prayers we
 shall pray
 In his boyhood's May,
 He and I, one day ?

IV.

For in the warm blue summer weather
We shall laugh and love together :

I shall watch my baby growing,
I shall guide his feet,

When the orange trees are blowing
And the winds are heavy and sweet !

When the orange orchards whiten
I shall see his great eyes brighten
To watch the long-legged camels going
Up the twisted street,

When the orange trees are blowing
And the winds are sweet.

*What does it mean ? Indeed, it seems
A dream ! Yet not like other dreams !*

We shall walk in pleasant vales,
Listening to the shepherd's song
I shall tell him lovely tales
All day long :
He shall laugh while mother sings
Tales of fishermen and kings.

He shall see them come and go

O'er the wistful sea,

Where rosy oleanders blow

Round blue Lake Galilee,

Kings with fishers' ragged coats

And silver nets across their boats,

Dipping through the starry glow,

With crowns for him and me !

Ah, no ;

Crowns for him, not me !

Rockaby so ! Indeed, it seems

A dream ! yet not like other dreams !

v. *

Ah, see what a wonderful smile again !

Shall I hide it away in my heart,

To remember one day in a world of pain

When the years have torn us apart,

Little babe,

When the years have torn us apart ?

Sleep, my little one, sleep,

Child with the wonderful eyes,

Wild miraculous eyes,

Deep as the skies are deep !

What star-bright glory of tears
 Waits in you now for the years
 That shall bid you waken and weep ?
 Ah, in that day, could I kiss you to sleep
 Then, little lips, little eyes,
 Little lips that are lovely and wise,
 Little lips that are dreadful and wise !

VI.

Clenched little hands like crumpled roses
 Dimpled and dear,
 Feet like flowers that the dawn uncloses,
 What do I fear ?
 Little hands, will you ever be clenched in anguish ?
 White little limbs, will you droop and languish ?
 Nay, what do I hear ?
 I hear a shouting, far away,
 You shall ride on a kingly palm-strewn way
 Some day !

But when you are crowned with a golden crown
 And throned on a golden throne,
 "You'll forget the manger of Bethlehem town
 And your mother that sits alone

Wondering whether the mighty king
 Remembers a song she used to sing,
 Long ago,
 "Rockaby so,
Kings may have wonderful jewels to bring,
Mother has only a kiss for her king!" . . .

Ah, see what a wonderful smile, once more !
 He opens his great dark eyes !
 Little child, little king, nay, hush, it is o'er,
 My fear of those deep twin skies,—
 Little child,
 You are all too dreadful and wise !

VII.

But now you are mine, all mine,
 And your feet can lie in my hand so small,
 And your tiny hands in my heart can twine,
 And you cannot walk, so you never shall fall,
 Or be pierced by the thorns beside the door,
 Or the nails that lie upon Joseph's floor ;
 Through sun and rain, through shadow and shine,
 You are mine, all mine !

THE COTTAGE OF THE KINDLY LIGHT.

-

THERE is a valley of fir-woods in the West
 • That slopes between great mountains to the sea.
 Once, at the valley's mouth, a cottage stood :
 Its ruins remain, like boulders of a rock,
 High on the hill, whose base is white with foam.
 To its forsaken garden sometimes come
 Lovers, who lean upon its grass-grown gate
 And listen to the sea-song far below ;
 Or little children, with their baskets, trip
 Merrily through the fir-woods and the fern,
 And climb the crumbling thistle-empurpled wall
 Around the tangled copse, and laugh to find
 The hardy straggling raspberries all their own.

Round it the curlews wheel and cry all night ;
 • And, with no other comfort than the stars
 Can faintly shed from their familiar heights

156 THE COTTAGE OF THE KINDLY LIGHT.

It has been patient, while the world below
Has hidden itself in darkness and in clouds
Of terror from the landward-rushing storm.
Like a small gleam of quartz in a great rock,
A tiny beacon in the whirling gloom,
It stood and gathered sorrow from the world.

There, many years ago, a woman dwelt,
A sailor's widow with her only son ;
And ever as she hugged him to her heart
In those glad days when he was but a child,
Her memories of one black eternal night
When she had watched and waited for the sail
That nevermore returned, filled her with one
Supreme, almost unbreathable, desire
That this her little one, her living bliss,
The last caress incarnate of her love,
Should never leave her side ; or, if he left,
Never set forth upon the sea : her flesh
Shuddered as the sea shuddered in the sun
Over the cold grave of her first last love
Even to dream of it ; yet she remained
Silent and passive on her sea-washed hill,
Facing the sunset, in that lonely home,
Where everything bore witness to the sea,—
The shells her love had brought from foreign lands,

The model ship he built ; yet she remained.
 For her first kisses lingered in the scent
 Of those rough wallflowers round the whitewashed walls,
 And the first flush of love that touched her cheek
 Lingered and lived and died and lived again
 In the pink thrift that nodded by the gate.
 As if these and her outlook o'er the sea
 Were nought else but her soul's one atmosphere,
 Wherein alone she lived and moved and breathed,
 Having no other thought but *This is home,*
My part in God's eternity, she still
 Remained. The lad grew ; yet her fear was dumb.

The lad grew, and the white foam kissed his feet
 Sporting upon the verge : the green waves laughed
 And smote their hard bright kisses on his lips
 As he swam out to meet them : the whole sea,
 Like some strange symbol of the spiritual deeps
 That hourly lure the soul of man in quest
 Of beauty, pleasure, knowledge, summoned him out,
 Out from the old faiths, the old fostering arms of home,
 Called him with strange new voices evermore,
 Called him with ringing names of high renown,
 With white-armed sirens in its blossoming waves,
 And heavenly cities in its westerling suns ;
 Called him ; and old adventures filled his heart,

158 THE COTTAGE OF THE KINDLY LIGHT.

And he forgot, as all of us forget,
The imperishable and infinite desire
Of the vacant arms and bosom that still yearn
For the little vanished children, still, still ache
To keep their children little ! He grew wroth
At aught that savoured of such fostering care
As mothers long to lavish, aught that seemed
To rob him of his manhood, his free-will :
And she—she understood and she was dumb.

And so the lad grew up ; and he was tall,
Supple, and sunburnt, and a flower of men.
His eyes had caught the blue of sea-washed skies,
And deepened with strange manhood, till, at last,
One eve in May his mother wandered down
The hill to await his coming, wistfully
Wandered, touching with vague and dreaming hands
The uncrumpling fronds of fern and budding roses
As if she thought them but the ghosts of spring.
From far below the golden breezes brought
A mellow music from the village church,
Which o'er the fragrant fir-wood she could see
Pointing a sky-blue spire to heaven : she knew
That music, her most heart-remembered song—

“ *Sun of my soul, thou Saviour dear,
It is not night if Thou be near !* ”

And as the music made her one with all
 That soft transfigured world of eventide,
 One with the flame that sanctified the West,
 One with the golden sabbath of the sea,
 One with the sweet responses of the woods,
 One with the kneeling mountains, there she saw
 In a tangle of ferns and roses and wild light
 Shot from the sunset through a glade of fir,
 Her boy and some young rival in his arms,
 A girl of seventeen summers, dusky-haired,
 Grey-eyed, and breasted like a crescent moon,
 Lifting her red lips in a dream of love
 Up to the red lips of her only son.
 Jealousy numbed the mother's lonely soul,
 And, sickening at the heart, she stole away.

Yet she said nothing when her boy returned ;
 And, after supper, she took down the Book,
 Her own dead grandsire's massive wedding-gift,
 The large-print Bible, like a corner-stone
 Hewn from the solemn fabric of his life—
 An heirloom for the guidance of his sons
 And their sons' sons ; and every night her boy
 Read it aloud to her—a last fond link
 * Frayed and nigh snapt already, for she knew
 It irked him. And he read, *Abide with us,*

160 THE COTTAGE OF THE KINDLY LIGHT.

For the day is far spent ; and she looked at him
Shyly, furtively. With great tears she gazed
As on a stranger in her child's new face.

At last he told her all—told of his love,
And how he must grow wealthy now and make
A home for his young sweetheart, how he meant
To work upon a neighbour's fishing-boat
Till he could buy one for himself. He ceased ;
Far off the sea sighed and a curlew wailed ;
A soft breeze brought a puff of wallflower scent
Warm through the casement.* He looked up and
smiled

Into his mother's face, and saw the tears
Creep through the gnarled old hands that hid her eyes.
He saw the star-light glisten on her tears !
He could not understand : her lips were dumb.

Oh, dumb and patient as our mother Earth
Watching from age to age the silent, swift,
Light-hearted progress of her careless sons
By new-old ways to one unaltering doom,
Through the long nights she waited as of old
Till in the dawn—and coloured like the dawn—
The tawny sails came home across the bar.
And every night she placed a little lamp

In the cottage window, that if e'er he gazed
 Homeward by night across the heaving sea
 He might be touched to memory. But she said
 Nothing. The lamp was like the liquid light
 In some dumb creature's eyes, that can but wait
 Until its master chance to see its love
 And deign to touch its brow.

Now in those days

There went a preacher through the country-side
 Filling men's hearts with fire ; and out at sea
 The sailors sang great hymns to God ; and one
 Stood up one night, among the gleaming nets
 Astream with silver herring in the moon,
 And pointed to the lamp that burned afar
 And said, "Such is that *Kindly Light* we sing !"
 And ever afterwards the widow's house
 Was called *The Cottage of the Kindly Light*.

One night there came a storm up from the wild
 Atlantic, and a cry of fierce despair
 Rang through the fishing-village ; and brave men
 Launched the frail lifeboat through a shawl-clad crowd
 Of weeping women. But, high o'er the storm,
 High on the hill one lonely woman stood,
 Amongst the thunders and the driving clouds,
 Searching, at every world-wide lightning glare,

The sudden miles of white stampeding sea
 Searching for what she knew was lost, ay lost
 For ever now ; but some strange inward pride
 Forbade her to go down and mix with those
 Who could cry out their loss upon the quays.
 High on the hill she stood and watched alone,
 Confessing nothing, acknowledging nothing,
 Without one moan, without one outward prayer,
 Buffeted by the scornful universe,
 Over the crash of seas that shook the world
 She stood, one steadfast fragment of the night ;
 And the wind kissed her and the weeping rain.

* * * * *

But braver men than those who fought the sea
 At dawn tramped up the hill, with aching hearts,
 To break her loss to her who knew it all
 Far better than the best of them. She stood
 Still at her gate and watched them as they came,
 Curiously noting in a strange dull dream
 The gleaming colours, the little rainbow pools
 The dawn made in their rough wet oilskin hats
 And wrinkled coats, like patches of the sea.

“Lost? My boy lost?” she smiled. “Nay, he will
 come!

To-morrow, or the next day, or the next
The Kindly Light will bring him home again."
And so, whate'er they answered, she would say—
"The Kindly Light will bring him home again";
Until, at last, thinking her dazed with grief,
They gently turned and went.

She had not wept.

And ere that week was over, came the girl
Her boy had loved. With tears and a white face
And garbed in black she came; and when she neared
The gate, his mother, proud and white with scorn,
Bade her return and put away that garb
Of mourning: and the girl saw, shrinking back,
The boy's own mother wore no sign of grief,
But all in white she stood; and like a flash
The girl thought, "God, she wears her wedding-dress!
Her grief has made her mad!"

And all that year

The widow lit the little Kindly Light
And placed it in the window. All that year
She watched and waited for her boy's return
At dawn from the high hill-top: all that year
She went in white, though through the village streets
Far, far below, the women went in black;

164 THE COTTAGE OF THE KINDLY LIGHT.

For all had lost some man ; but all that year
She said to her friends and neighbours, " He will
come ;

He is delayed ; some ship has picked him up
And borne him out to some far-distant land !
Why should I mourn the living ? " And, at dusk,
As if it were indeed the Kindly Light
Of faith and hope and love, she lit the lamp
And placed it in the window.

The year passed ;

And on an eve in May her boy's love climbed
The hill once more, and as the stars came out
And the dusk gathered round her tenderly,
And the last boats came stealing o'er the bar,
And the immeasurable sea lay bright and bare
And beautiful to all infinity
Beneath the last faint colours of the sun
And the increasing kisses of the moon,
A hymn came on a waft of evening wind
Along the valley from the village church
And thrilled her with a new significance
Unfelt before. It was the hymn they heard
On that sweet night among the rose-lit fern—
Sun of my soul ; and, as she climbed the hill,
She wondered, for she saw no Kindly Light
Glimmering from the window ; and she thought

"Perhaps the madness leaves her." There the hymn,
Like one great upward flight of angels, rose
All round her, mingling with the sea's own voice—

*"Come near and bless us when we wake,
Ere through the world our way we take,—
Till, in the ocean of Thy love,
We lose ourselves in heaven above."*

And when she passed the pink thrift by the gate,
And the rough wallflowers by the whitewashed wall,
And entered, she beheld the widow kneeling,
In black, beside the unlit Kindly Light ;
And near her dead cold hand upon the floor
A fallen taper, for with her last strength
She had striven to light it and, so failing, died.

IN THE COOL OF THE EVENING.

I.

IN the cool of the evening, when the low sweet whispers
waken,
When the labourers turn them homeward, and the
weary have their will,
When the censers of the roses o'er the forest-aisles are
shaken,
Is it but the wind that cometh o'er the far green hill ?

II.

For they say 'tis but the sunset winds that wander
through the heather,
Rustle all the meadow-grass and bend the dewy fern ;
They say 'tis but the winds that bow the reeds in prayer
together,
And fill the shaken pools with fire along the shadowy
burn.

III.

In the beauty of the twilight, in the Garden that He
loveth,
They have veiled His lovely vesture with the darkness
of a name !
Thro' His Garden, thro' His Garden it is but the wind
that moveth,
No more ;~ but O, the miracle, the miracle is the
same !

IV.

In the cool of the evening, when the sky is an old story
Slowly dying, but remembered, ay, and loved with
passion still,
Hush ! . . . the fringes of His garment, in the fading
golden glory,
Softly rustling as He cometh o'er the far green hill,

A ROUNDHEAD'S RALLYING SONG.

I.

How beautiful is the battle,
How splendid are the spears,
When our banner is the sky
And our watchword *Liberty*,
And our kingdom lifted high above the years.

II.

How purple shall our blood be,
How glorious our scars,
When we lie there in the night
With our faces full of light
And the death upon them smiling at the stars.*

III.

How golden is our hauberk,

And steel, and steel our sword,

And our shield without a stain

As we take the field again,

We whose armour is the armour of the Lord !

THE ANSWER.

DO YE BELIEVE? We never wrote
 For fools at ease to know
 The doubt that grips us by the throat,
 The faith that lurks below ;
 But we have stood beside our dead,
 And, in that hour of need,
 One tear the Man of Sorrows shed
 Was more than any creed.

*Do ye believe ?—*from age to age
 The little thinkers cry ;
 And rhymesters ape the puling sage
 In pride of artistry.
 Did Joshua stay a sun that rolls
 Around a central earth ?—
 Our modern men have modern souls
 And formulate their mirth.

But, while they laugh, from shore to shore
From sea to moaning sea,
Eloi, Eloi, goes up once more
Lama sabacthani !

The heavens are like a scroll unfurled,
The writing flames above—
This is the King of all the world
Upon his Cross of Love !

His members marred with wounds are we
In whom the spirit strives,
One Body of one Mystery,
One Life in many lives :
Darkly as in a glass we see
The mystic glories glow,
Nor shrink from God's Infinity
Incarnate here below !

In flower and dust, in chaff and grain,
He binds Himself and dies,
We live by His eternal pain,
His hourly sacrifice ;
The limits of our mortal life
Are his : the whisper thrills
Under the sea's perpetual strife
And through the sunburnt hills.

Seek ; ye shall find each flower on earth
A gateway to My heart,
Whose Life has brought each leaf to birth ;
The whole is in the part !
So to My sufferers have ye given
What help or hope may be ;
Oh then, through earth, through hell, through heaven,
Ye did it unto Me !

Darkly, as in a glass, our sight
Still gropes through Time and Space :
We cannot see the Light of Light
With angels, face to face ;
Only the tale His martyrs tell
Around the dark earth rings—
He died and He went down to hell
And lives—the King of kings !

Do ye believe ? On every side
Great hints of Him go by :
Souls that are hourly crucified
On some new Calvary !
Oh, tortured faces, white and meek,
Half seen amidst the crowd,
Grey suffering lips that never speak,
The Glory in the Cloud !

Do ye believe ? The straws that dance
Far down the dusty road
Mean little to the careless glance
By careless eyes bestowed,
Till full into your face the wind
Smites, and the laugh is dumb ;
And, from the rending heavens behind,
Christ answers—*Lo, I come.*

CREDO.

THOU that art throned so^o far above
 All earthly names, e'en those we deem
 Eternal, e'en that name of Love
 Which—as one speaketh in a dream—
 We whisper, ere the morning breaks,
 And the hands yearn, and the heart aches,

O, Thou that reignest, whom of old
 Men sought to appease by praise or prayer
 The spirit's little gifts of gold,
 The soul's faint frankincense and myrrh,
 Though we the sons of deeper days
 Can bring thee neither prayer nor praise,

We have not turned in doubt aside
 Nor mocked with our ephemeral breath
 The little creeds that man's poor pride
 Still fashions in these gulfs of death,
 The little creeds that only prove
 Thou art so far, so far above,

So far beyond all Space and Time,
So infinitely far, that none
Though by ten thousand heavens he climb
Higher, shall yet be higher by one,
So far that—whelmed with light—we dare,
Father, to know that Thou art here.*
